OCASA

ORANGE COUNTY ACADEMY OF SCIENCES & ARTS

Capistrano Elementary School

PARENT / STUDENT HANDBOOK

2026–2027 School Year

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Mission & Vision

Mission

OCASA Elementary is a joy-filled, student-centered, collaborative community that inspires growth through a personalized learning experience.

Vision

OCASA believes students learn best when…

- …small groups collaborate through hands-on projects.
- …learning is a continuum with a focus on mastery.
- …cross-curricular opportunities in science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics are the norm.
- …teachers and students work together to inspire curiosity through inquiry-based learning.
- …their educational journey is personalized to their individual needs.

Parent/Guardian Welcome Letter

Dear Parents/Guardians:

On behalf of Orange County Academy of Sciences and Arts (OCASA), welcome to the new school year. As we begin year ten, we welcome your participation as we grow our existing programs.

Please take advantage of the numerous opportunities to participate in your student's education. These include volunteering through Parent Forums, PTSA, field trips, classroom needs, and more. Please join us at our Parent Forum Meetings as well as our monthly PTSA meetings in order to stay informed about issues and events at OCASA. In addition, you are welcome at our Board Meetings, where you will learn more about the operational side of OCASA.

This Parent/Student Handbook has been revised to address general questions you may have related to OCASA policies and to advise you of your rights and responsibilities. Please take the time to review the information in this handbook and the supporting documents as a family to clarify student expectations on campus. Should you require further explanation of any of the Education Codes and laws cited in this handbook, you may contact the Principal for clarification.

Please know that our primary goal is to provide your child with an outstanding academic education in a safe and nurturing environment. We look forward to your participation in our school events and invite you to become one of our parent volunteers. We thank you in advance and appreciate your support. We will do everything in our power to ensure that your child has a successful educational experience. Remember, we need you as a part of our educational team.

We look forward to working closely with all of you this school year.

Sincerely,

OCASA Staff and Board of Directors

OCASA Community Compact & General Operations

I. School Commitment (Three-Way Responsibility)

A. Our School Commitment

OCASA commits to providing a safe, joyful, and academically rigorous learning environment; communicating clearly and regularly with families; teaching and reinforcing the STAR behavioral expectations consistently across campus; and partnering with families to support the whole child — academically, socially, and emotionally.

B. The Parent/Guardian Commitment

Parents and guardians commit to ensuring regular, punctual attendance; supporting the school's academic and behavioral expectations at home; reviewing and responding to school communications (ParentSquare and phone); and engaging as active partners in their student's educational journey.

C. The Student Commitment

Students commit to following the STAR expectations (Safe, Thoughtful, Accountable, Respectful) in every campus setting; giving their best effort academically; treating peers and staff with kindness and respect; and taking ownership of their choices and their learning.

General Information & Campus Policies

School & Office Hours

- **School Hours:** 7:50 AM - 2:20 PM (M, T, W, F) 7:50 - 12:30 (Thursdays)
- **Parent Drop off:** 7:25 - 7:45 AM: PAC Gate closes at 7:50 AM
- **Parent Pick up:** 2:20 PM - 2:40 PM (M, T, W, F); 12:30 PM - 12:50 PM (Thursdays)
- **Tardy:** If students aren't in class at 7:50, they are tardy. **Parents must sign students in at the Mission Control attendance window if they are tardy.**
- **Mission Control Hours:** 7:30 AM - 3:00 PM (Monday through Friday)
- **Transportation:** Parents/guardians are expected to arrange for daily student transportation to and from school within the designated operational windows.
- **Campus Vacating Rules:** Apart from students participating in supervised, school-sponsored activities, all students must vacate the premises immediately after school. Students must leave the campus promptly when their specific school-sponsored activity ends.

Emergency Contact Information

Families must keep at least two emergency contacts and one Emergency Information / Medical Release form on file at all times. It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to promptly update contact information, custody documentation, and medical information whenever it changes.

Parent Custody Documentation

In the absence of a current, certified court order on file limiting a parent/guardian's access to a student, OCASA will presume both legal parents/guardians have equal rights to campus access, records, and student pick-up. Families experiencing a change in custody status must provide OCASA with certified copies of all relevant court orders as soon as possible.

> **Critical Notice:** If a valid court order is not explicitly filed with the front office, the school has no legal choice or alternative but to release your child to either natural parent or legal guardian upon their official request.

Drop-Off and Pick-Up Procedures

A. Morning Drop-Off Protocols

Students should arrive during the designated arrival window and proceed directly to their designated breakfast or lineup area. Parents/guardians using the drop-off lane must follow posted traffic patterns and staff directions at all times, and should not exit vehicles in the active drop-off lane.

- **Drop-Off Lane Window:** 7:25 AM - 7:45 AM **ONLY** after that time parents/guardians are required to walk their child into school
- **Supervision Notice:** Please do not arrive or drop students off earlier than 7:25 AM, as there is no staff supervision available before this time.

- **Hang Tag Requirement:** Your official OCASA Hang Tag must be clearly displayed on your rearview mirror to enter the parking lot.
- **Traffic Flow:** All vehicles must pull completely forward in the lane before stopping to unload students. Drivers must remain inside the vehicle at all times.
- **Unloading Efficiency:** Students must be fully prepared to exit the vehicle immediately upon stopping. If your student requires extra time or assistance to exit, please pull completely forward *past* the crosswalk in the designated drop-off zone.

Tardy & Gate Policy

Any vehicle attempting to enter the parking lot **after 7:45 AM** will be denied entry to the lot and directed to park on the street. (There is NO open parking available in the school lot).

If your student arrives after 7:49 AM, they are officially tardy. **The parent/guardian must park on the street, walk the student to the Attendance Window, and physically check the student into school.** Do not drop your student off on the street to walk in alone. The tardy will be logged per the Attendance Policy (see the Comprehensive Attendance & Independent Study Policy section).

B. Afternoon Pick-Up Protocols

Students will only be released to a parent, legal guardian, or an individual explicitly designated on the student's Emergency Information Release form. Please see the Closed Campus Regulations & Security section for identification requirements at release.

- **Standard Pick-Up Window (M, T, W, F):** 2:20 PM - 2:40 PM **ONLY**
- **Minimum Day Pick-Up Window (Thursday):** 12:30 PM - 12:50 PM **ONLY**
- **Hang Tag Requirement:** Your official OCASA Hang Tag must be clearly displayed on your rearview mirror to enter the parking lot.
- **Loading Rules:** Pull forward completely before stopping. Drivers must remain in their vehicles at all times. Students will wait at designated safety cones and will only load vehicles at those locations. Staff and volunteers will assist students into vehicles at the designated loading cones.
- **Seatbelt Notice:** Staff members **will not** buckle student seatbelts or secure booster seats. Students must be able to buckle themselves independently, or the driver must pull forward *past* the crosswalk to assist them safely.

Late Pick-Up Policy

Any vehicle attempting to enter the parking lot after the close of the window (2:40 PM on regular days / 12:50 PM on Thursdays) will be directed to park on the street, and the parent must walk onto campus to pick up their student.

All students remaining on campus after the pick-up window closes will be automatically checked into the Beyond the Stars after-school program. A flat drop-in fee will be assessed to the family's account immediately upon enrollment.

School Policies, Emergencies, & Volunteer Guidelines

I. Emergency Preparedness & Safety Operations

OCASA Elementary maintains a comprehensive School Safety Plan in the event that a natural disaster, emergency, or safety incident occurs during the school day. Please review these critical emergency response parameters:

- **Student Custody & Supervision:** The Principal and school staff will remain fully responsible for all students on campus until a parent/guardian or an officially designated, authorized emergency contact arrives.
- **Identification Mandate:** Students will **only** be released to individuals who present a valid, government-issued photo ID. There are no exceptions to this protocol during an emergency extraction.
- **Communication Channels: Please DO NOT CALL the school during an emergency.** Inundating phone lines blocks critical communication channels with emergency first responders. Official updates will be shared with families immediately via ParentSquare.
- **Contact Information:** Parents/guardians are required to keep all phone numbers and emergency contacts up to date in Power School so that emergency text notifications can be delivered successfully.
- **Emotional Support:** We ask that all parents maintain a calm appearance and a positive, supportive attitude in the presence of students during an incident to reduce child anxiety.
- **Evacuation Procedures:** If the campus must be evacuated, an official physical sign will be prominently posted on the school grounds indicating the exact location of our off-site emergency evacuation center.
- **Lockdown Restrictions:** In the event of an active campus lockdown, **no student will be permitted to leave the campus** for any reason until an official "all-clear" signal is explicitly delivered to the school administration by law enforcement or local authorities.

II. Responsibility for Lost or Damaged School Property

Students and families are responsible for the reasonable care of school-issued materials, textbooks, and technology. Families may be billed for the replacement cost of lost or willfully damaged school property, consistent with California Education Code § 48904.

III. Reporting to Parents & Grading Periods

Open communication is vital to your child's educational progress. Teachers utilize weekly newsletters and ParentSquare messaging to stay in close contact with families.

- **Parent-Teacher Conferences:** Individual parent-teacher conferences may be scheduled on any operational day after 2:40 PM. Please schedule these directly with your student's teacher at least 48 hours in advance so they have sufficient time to prepare relevant information and data metrics.
- **Official Reporting Cycles:** Formal reporting periods across the school year occur as follows:

1. **Fall:** Goal Setting Conferences
2. **Spring:** Goal Setting Conferences
3. **End of Semester:** Official Progress Report Cards

IV. Minimizing Classroom Interruptions

To protect instructional integrity and ensure a campus environment focused on academic learning time, we ask for parent cooperation with the following regulations:

- **Integrated Birthday Celebrations:** Individual student birthday parties are not permitted on regular instructional days. Instead, classroom birthday celebrations are combined and held on the last Friday of each month.
- **Celebration Restrictions:** Birthday celebrations cannot include any outside food items due to severe student allergies, dietary restrictions, and school wellness policies. Furthermore, do not send or bring balloons of any kind onto the campus.
- **Item Drop-Offs:** If your student forgets a lunch, homework project, or personal item, it must be left directly with Mission Control (front office). Staff will deliver it to the student at an appropriate, non-disruptive time. Parents may not walk to classrooms to deliver items.
- **Smart Watch Restrictions:** All student smart watch messaging capabilities, cellular signals, and notifications must be turned off during school hours. Smart watches used for communication during class will be collected and held in the office.
- **End-of-Day Messages:** Please limit messages delivered to students through the front office after the school day has begun. Emergency messages only will be routed to classrooms.

Early Dismissal Protocol

When arriving on campus, the parent/guardian **must report to Mission Control to physically sign the student out**. You must present a government-issued photo ID. Office staff will then call the classroom and have the student come to meet you.

Visitors on Campus

For the safety of our students and staff, visitors are strictly prohibited from entering campus or participating in school activities without prior administrative authorization.

- **Sign-In Requirement:** All visitors, including school alumni, must report directly to Mission Control immediately upon arrival.
- **Visitor Badges:** All visitors are required to present a valid, government-issued photo ID. Approved visitors will be issued a Visitor's Badge, which must be worn in clear, visible view on their outer clothing at all times while on school grounds.

V. Campus Volunteer Policy & Code of Conduct

A. How to Become an Eligible Volunteer

All regular campus volunteers must complete a multi-step compliance process before entering a classroom or chaperoning a fieldtrip The process consists of a Live Scan/fingerprint background check (TB clearance where applicable),volunteer training video and sign OCASA's volunteer code of conduct prior to volunteering with students.

B. Approved Volunteer Placement

Volunteer placements are coordinated through the classroom teacher and/or the PTSA volunteer coordinator, based on classroom and campus needs.

C. Health & Safety Guidelines

Volunteers must sign in at Mission Control, wear a visible volunteer badge, and follow all campus safety and confidentiality guidelines, including maintaining the privacy of student information observed while volunteering.

- **Illness Protocol:** If you are experiencing any symptoms of illness on your scheduled volunteer day, please do not come to campus. As a courtesy, notify the teacher or office staff as soon as possible so they can adjust their classroom coverage.
- **Strict Confidentiality Mandate:** While volunteering, you may see, hear, or have access to protected student information. Volunteers are legally bound to maintain absolute confidentiality regarding student grades, behavioral incidents, learning accommodations, or performance levels. Any student or staff concerns must be shared exclusively with the classroom teacher or the Principal, never with other parents or community members.
- **Behavior and Discipline: Volunteers do not discipline students.** You may provide light instructional redirection (e.g., reminding a student to stay on task), but any persistent behavioral or disciplinary issues must be immediately reported directly to the credentialed classroom teacher or Instructional Assistant (IA).
- **Supervision Rules:** Volunteers must work under the direct supervision of credentialed school staff at all times. A volunteer may never be left alone to supervise a classroom, and a volunteer may never give a student permission to leave the classroom unescorted.
- **Instructional Boundaries:** Volunteers do not diagnose student academic weaknesses or strengths, prescribe learning activities, write evaluations, or write comments/grades on student papers.
- **Classroom Distractions:** Personal cell phones must be silenced or turned off during volunteer hours. Conversations with teachers or other volunteers must not interrupt active student instructional time.
- **Siblings and Preschoolers:** Volunteers are **not permitted** to bring infants, toddlers, or non-enrolled preschool children into the classroom during instructional volunteer slots. Doing so introduces severe school liability issues and disrupts the educational flow.
- **Professional Conduct:** Volunteers must serve as positive role models. This requires being well-groomed, wearing school-appropriate attire, and using professional, constructive language at all times.
- **Medication Ban:** Volunteers are strictly prohibited from administering medication (including over-the-counter items like cough drops or aspirin) to any student. All medical needs must be routed to the health office.
- **Media Restrictions:** Volunteers are legally prohibited from taking photographs or videos of students on personal devices unless explicitly directed to do so by a school administrator or teacher for an approved school project.

- **Physical Contact Boundaries:** Volunteers must never touch a student in an aggressive, disciplinary, or inappropriate manner.

Campus Access, Civility, and Personal Property

I. Conditions for Classroom/School Visitation & Removal Policy

While OCASA Elementary encourages parents/guardians and interested community members to visit our campus and view our innovative educational programs, OCASA must maintain a secure, orderly environment for students and staff. Visitors must adhere strictly to the following procedures to maximize safety and minimize disruptions to the instructional day.

A. General Campus Loitering Restraints

Parents/guardians, community visitors, and non-enrolled children shall not loiter on the school premises, including the parking lot, drop-off/pick-up lanes, and walkways outside school buildings. The parking lot must be used exclusively for the active transportation of students. Parents/guardians and visitors are expected to vacate the campus premises immediately upon the conclusion of formal school business or after completing student drop-off.

B. Prior Authorization and Check-In Procedures

Pursuant to California Penal Code § 627 et seq. and applicable school board policy, all visitors must comply with state-mandated registration and identification requirements as well as district protocols for classroom visits and instructional observations:

- Advance Notice Required: Visits during regular school hours must be arranged with the classroom teacher and the Principal (or administrative designee) at least three (3) school days in advance.
- Written Approval: Parents/guardians seeking to observe a classroom session must secure written or digital approval from the classroom teacher and school administration via ParentSquare prior to arrival.
- Mandatory Registration: All visitors must sign in at Mission Control immediately upon entering school grounds, providing their full legal name, physical address, purpose for entering campus, and a valid government-issued photo ID, as required by Penal Code § 627.
- Visitor Badges: A visible visitor's badge will be issued upon check-in and must be worn on outer clothing at all times while on campus.

C. Refusal of Registration and Withdrawal of Consent

The Principal or administrative designee reserves the right to refuse registration to an outsider or to withdraw a visitor's consent to remain on campus pursuant to California Penal Code §§ 627.4 and 627.7. Such action may be taken when there is reasonable cause to believe that the individual's presence or actions would:

- Disrupt school operations, the student body, teachers, or other employees.
- Interfere with the peaceful, orderly conduct of school activities.
- Result in willful damage to school property.
- Involve the distribution, possession, or use of unlawful or controlled substances.

If a visitor fails to register, or if registration is denied or revoked, the Principal or designee will direct the individual to leave school grounds immediately.

> ***Statutory Warning:*** *When consent to remain on campus is withdrawn, the visitor will be formally advised that re-entering school property without complying with administrative requirements constitutes a misdemeanor under California law.*

D. Revocation Appeal and Hearing Process

Any visitor whose campus registration privileges are denied, or whose access is administratively revoked under this policy, may request a formal administrative hearing regarding the propriety of the denial or revocation under the following terms:

- Written Request: The appeal must be submitted in writing, state exactly why the revocation or denial was improper, provide a mailing address for notifications, and be delivered directly to the Principal or the Board President within five (5) school days of the revocation date.
- Administrative Hearing Timeframes: A hearing before the Principal shall be conducted within seven (7) school days of receiving the written request.
- Governing Board Hearing Timeframes: An appeal directed to the Board of Directors shall be placed on the agenda and heard at the next regularly scheduled public Board meeting following receipt of the request.
- Law Enforcement Intercession: The Principal or administrative designee will immediately contact local law enforcement to assist with or report any individual who violates a removal directive or poses an active threat to campus peace.

E. Legal Penalties & Restraining Orders

- Criminal Sanctions: Under California Penal Code § 627.7, any visitor who refuses to leave campus after being directed to do so, or who returns to school grounds during a period of revoked consent without proper authorization, is guilty of a misdemeanor punishable by a fine of up to $500, imprisonment in the county jail for up to six (6) months, or both. In addition, Education Code § 44811 imposes misdemeanor penalties for willfully disrupting or interfering with school employees in the performance of their duties.
- Civil Restraining Orders: Continued hostile, disruptive, threatening, or unauthorized behavior may result in the school seeking a civil workplace violence restraining order under California Code of Civil Procedure § 527.8. Such an order may legally prohibit the individual from entering school grounds or attending school-sponsored events for up to three (3) years.

F. Electronic Listening and Recording Restrictions

In strict adherence to California Education Code § 51512, the use of any electronic listening, viewing, or recording device — including audio recorders, hidden microphones, smart-watch recording features, and video cameras — inside a classroom is prohibited unless prior consent is obtained from both the classroom teacher and the Principal, documented in writing before any recording may occur.

II. School Civility Policy

Members of the OCASA staff are committed to treating parents/guardians and the public with mutual respect, and expect the same professional standard of courtesy in return. The school maintains orderly educational and administrative processes to keep classrooms and offices free from hostility, harassment, and unauthorized disruption. This policy is designed to preserve a safe, constructive workplace for students and staff, and is not intended to deprive any individual of their constitutional right to freedom of expression.

A. Resolution of Hostile or Aggressive Disruptions

- Removal for Disruptive Actions: Any individual who actively disrupts or threatens to disrupt school/office operations, threatens the health or safety of campus personnel or students, causes intentional property damage, or uses loud, profane, or offensive language that could provoke a violent reaction will be directed to leave the premises immediately by an administrator.
- Termination of Meetings or Calls: If an individual uses obscenities or speaks in a demanding, aggressive, insulting, or demeaning manner, school staff will calmly ask them to communicate civilly. If the individual does not adjust their behavior, the employee will verbally state that the meeting, conference, or telephone call is terminated.
- Staff Accountability: Disruptive or uncivil behavior initiated by an OCASA staff member toward a parent or community member is subject to the same strict standards and will result in prompt administrative investigation and disciplinary action under governing employment policies.

B. Post-Removal Re-Entry Restrictions

When an individual is directed to leave campus due to uncivil, hostile, or disruptive conduct, the administrator will formally advise them that re-entering an OCASA facility in violation of this directive constitutes a misdemeanor under California Penal Code § 627.7.

Criminal Sanctions: Under Penal Code § 627.7 and Education Code § 44811, a visitor who refuses to leave when directed, or who returns without authorization after consent has been withdrawn, may be charged with a misdemeanor punishable by a fine of up to $500, imprisonment in county jail for up to six (6) months, or both. Penal Code § 415.5 may also apply in cases involving disturbances on school grounds.

Exclusion Windows (School Policy)

- General Public: Excluded from re-entering the facility for thirty (30) days from the date of the incident, pursuant to OCASA policy.
- Parents/Guardians: Excluded for seven (7) days from the date of the incident, unless specialized administrative drop-off arrangements are authorized, pursuant to OCASA policy.

If an individual refuses to leave upon request or returns before the applicable exclusion period expires, law enforcement will be contacted immediately.

C. Safety, Security, and Incident Reporting

- Mandatory Reporting & WVPP Tracking: When physical violence, property damage, or theft is directed against an employee, or when an attack, assault, or explicit threat is made against personnel on school grounds or at a school activity, the employee must promptly report the

occurrence to their supervisor. In accordance with California Labor Code § 6401.9, the incident will be documented, evaluated, and logged as part of the school's Workplace Violence Prevention Plan.

- Liability for Student Misconduct: An employee whose person or personal property is injured or damaged by the willful misconduct of a student may request that the school pursue financial or legal restitution from the student's parent or guardian pursuant to California Education Code § 48904.

III. Personal Belongings and Electronic Devices

A. Non-School-Related Personal Belongings

Students must not bring non-school-related personal items or toys to campus, including trading cards, collectibles, miniature figurines or action figures, fidget spinners, pop-its, and electronic toys.

> ***Loss & Confiscation Policy:*** *OCASA accepts zero financial or operational responsibility for the loss, theft, or destruction of non-school-related personal items brought to campus. Faculty and administration retain authority to confiscate these items if they are out during the school day. Confiscated items will be held in the front office for parental pick-up.*

B. Cell Phones, Smart Watches & Other Personal Electronic Devices

OCASA's full cell phone and personal electronic device policy — including the required statutory exceptions under California Education Code § 48901.7 — is set out in one place: see “Digital Technology, Acceptable Use, and Telecommunications, Part IV” later in this handbook.

Animal Policies, Campus Security, and Academic Placements

I. Campus Animal Policy & Accommodations

To protect the health, safety, and comfort of all students, staff, and visitors, particularly those with severe allergies, respiratory conditions, or phobias, OCASA Elementary maintains a strict policy regarding animals on school grounds.

A. Personal Pets and General Restrictions

Personal pets and companion animals are strictly prohibited on the OCASA campus without express, written prior approval from the Principal or an administrative designee, including during drop-off, pick-up, classroom volunteering, or field trips.

B. Service Animals (ADA)

In strict compliance with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and California civil-rights law, service animals as defined by federal regulation are permitted in all areas of campus where the public is normally allowed to go. On a closed-campus school like OCASA, public-accessible areas include the front office, designated meeting rooms for scheduled appointments, and event spaces open to the public. Access to student-only instructional areas, classrooms, playgrounds, and secured interior campus zones is limited to individuals granted authorized entry under school policy.

Legal Definition: Under 28 C.F.R. §§ 35.104 and 35.136, a service animal is limited to a dog or, in certain cases, a miniature horse, individually trained to perform specific work or tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability. The tasks performed must be directly related to the individual's disability.

Permissible Administrative Inquiries: When it is not readily apparent what service an animal provides, staff may ask only: (1) Is the animal required because of a disability? and (2) What work or task has the animal been trained to perform? Staff will not request documentation, require a demonstration of tasks, or ask about the nature of the disability.

> ***Statutory Misdemeanor Warning:*** *Pursuant to California Penal Code § 365.7, any individual who knowingly and fraudulently represents that a domestic animal is a trained service dog — when it has not been trained to perform tasks associated with a disability — is guilty of a criminal misdemeanor, punishable by a fine of up to $1,000, imprisonment in county jail for up to six (6) months, or both.*

C. Emotional Support Animals (ESAs)

An emotional support animal, therapy animal, or comfort pet is an animal whose sole function is to provide emotional support, comfort, or companionship. The federal protections and public-access mandates granted to service animals under the ADA do not extend to emotional support animals — comfort alone does not constitute a trained task.

- Campus Policy: OCASA will deny campus access to emotional support animals, with a single exception: an ESA explicitly documented and authorized as a necessary accommodation within a student's IEP or Section 504 Plan.
- Therapy Animal Exception (School-Authorized Program Only): OCASA may authorize a trained therapy dog as part of an approved school program, vetted for training, temperament,

vaccination, and insurance. This does not create a right for the public, students, or staff to bring personal therapy or emotional support animals onto campus.

II. Closed Campus Regulations & Security

OCASA Elementary operates a strictly closed campus, enforced to maintain custody control and student safety from morning arrival through final dismissal.

A. Student Release & Emergency Authorized Pick-Up

- Students are prohibited from leaving campus once they arrive, unless explicit permission is granted through the front office.
- Students will only be released into the custody of a parent, legal guardian, or an adult explicitly designated on the student's Emergency Information / Medical Release form.
- The releasing adult must present a valid, government-issued photo ID to Mission Control staff before a student will be called from class or permitted to exit the building.

B. Campus Perimeter Security

- Any individual on school grounds or walking the perimeter during the instructional day will be approached by staff or campus security to verify identity, purpose and redirect to Mission Control.
- Emergency items, forgotten lunches, or school projects must be labeled with the student's name and grade and dropped off at Mission Control — not delivered directly to a classroom or cafeteria.

III. Classroom Placement & Schedule Changes

- School-Initiated Placements: Class placement, cohort grouping, or course withdrawal decisions remain at the discretion of the Principal or administrative designee.
- Parent-Requested Transfers: To preserve instructional continuity, parent-requested classroom placement changes are considered only at the conclusion of each semester, in preparation for the subsequent semester.

Dietary Policies, Campus Dining, and Uniform Standards

I. Snack, Breakfast, and Lunch Policy

1. Morning Breakfast Program

Breakfast is served daily from 7:25 AM to 7:45 AM in the designated outdoor dining area. The service line closes promptly at 7:45 AM to ensure students are not tardy and seated in their classrooms for the start of instruction.

- **Dining Locations:** To maintain a clean and orderly learning environment, breakfast must be consumed entirely within the designated outdoor dining area. Students are not permitted to bring breakfast items into the classrooms unless administration declares an alternate inclement weather schedule.
- **Student Responsibility:** Students are expected to clean their immediate dining space, properly dispose of all trash or recyclables, and leave the area ready for their peers immediately upon finishing their meal.

2. Daily Snack Period

Each grade level is allocated a daily snack break. Families are encouraged to send a nutritious snack from home; please avoid candy, soda, or high-sugar snacks.

> ***Strict Nut-Free Campus Mandate:*** *OCASA Elementary is a strictly nut-free campus. No foods containing peanuts, tree nuts, or nut-based derivatives are permitted on campus, in packed lunches, or during snack periods.*

In compliance with the California Universal Meals Program (Education Code § 49501), OCASA provides a nutritionally balanced breakfast and lunch daily at no cost to any student who requests one.

3. Lunch Operations

Students are provided adequate, dedicated time to eat lunch before engaging in recess or social activities, and are expected to keep their dining area clean.

4. Campus Dining Boundaries

Food and beverages must be consumed within authorized eating zones. Eating inside a classroom is permitted only during approved schoolwide celebrations, rainy-day schedules, or with a teacher's prior authorization.

5. Outside Food & Shared Items Policy

All outside food brought for classroom events must be pre-approved and checked in at Mission Control. Students are strictly prohibited from sharing or trading food items with peers due to allergy tracking.

II. OCASA Daily Uniform & Dress Code Policy

General Expectations

- Students must maintain a clean, neat, and healthy personal appearance; clothing must fit appropriately, match school colors, and be free of rips or fraying.
- A student's appearance must not cause a distraction to the educational process or feature messages inappropriate for an elementary environment.
- Parents and guardians are expected to support the campus dress policy by ensuring their children leave for school properly groomed and in approved attire.
- Administrative staff retain sole and final authority on the interpretation and enforcement of the dress code.

Weekly Uniform Schedule

- Monday–Thursday: Standard uniform or approved optional uniform pieces.
- Standard Fridays: Official OCASA Spirit Wear shirt with standard uniform bottoms.
- Assembly Fridays: Formal Uniform Attire (Option 1, 2, or 3) is required.

> **Non-Compliance Protocol:** If a student arrives at school out of uniform or in violation of the dress code, the Mission Control will issue a formal dress code violation notice. Parents/guardians will be contacted and required to promptly deliver appropriate clothing items to the campus so the student can return to class.

Prohibited Items

- Denim of any kind; athletic wear (sweatpants, joggers, standalone leggings, gym shorts); cargo-style pockets; non-sanctioned graphics; open-toed shoes, sandals, flip-flops, house shoes, high heels, or wheeled footwear. Footwear must protect the structural safety of students on campus.

Structural Garment Guidelines

- Skirts/Skorts/Dresses: hemlines must be appropriate for the students waistline and no more than four (4) inches above the knee; solid grey or black modesty shorts required underneath.
- Leggings / Tights may be worn under skirts or dresses for warmth during cold weather, however, leggings may never be worn alone as standalone pants.
- Pants/Shorts: must fit at the natural waist, free of sagging; no distressed, torn, or ultra-skinny cuts.
- Undershirts: if visible, must match the color of the outer shirt.

Uniform choices are not restricted by age, grade, or gender — any student may choose any of the three formal uniform options (Pants & Tie, Shift Dress, or Skirt/Skort) that best fits them.

Authorized Uniform Options (Summary)

Option 1: Pants & Tie	Option 2: Shift Dress	Option 3: Skirt/Skort
Grey trousers, black belt, white Oxford shirt (tucked), plaid tie, grey/white/black socks, closed-toed shoes.	Plaid shift dress, Peter Pan collar shirt, cross-over black tie, modesty shorts underneath, socks or footed tights, closed-toed shoes.	Plaid or grey skirt/skort, white Oxford shirt (tucked), plaid tie, modesty shorts underneath, socks or footed tights, closed-toed shoes.

Purchasing and Vendor Information

Uniform pieces may be sourced from any retail vendor that aligns with the color, cut, and style specifications above. Families can also purchase through the Lands' End Custom Shopping Site (school number 900206707) or shopOCASA.org for spirit wear.

Comprehensive Attendance & Independent Study Policy

I. Overview & Philosophy

OCASA recognizes that regular, punctual school attendance is a vital component of academic success and social-emotional development. Chronic absenteeism and truancy directly disrupt the instructional continuity necessary for pupils to thrive.

Pursuant to California Education Code § 48200 and Penal Code § 272, every child between the ages of 6 and 18 is subject to compulsory full-time education, and parents or legal guardians are legally responsible for ensuring their child's regular school attendance.

II. Attendance Verification and Reporting Procedures

A. Reporting an Absence

When a student is absent, the parent or guardian must notify Mission Control on each day of the absence, 24/7, via direct phone call to the attendance line or digital submission (ParentSquare). If Mission Control does not receive an absence notice by the morning registration cutoff, school personnel will attempt to contact the family to verify the student's safety.

B. Satisfactory Methods of Verification

An absence remains unexcused until verified by an authorized school official. Upon return, the parent/guardian must present a satisfactory explanation via a direct phone call/ParentSquare message specifying the student's name, dates, and reason, or a note from a licensed healthcare provider certifying medical necessity.

> ***Critical Deadline:*** *Any absence that remains unverified forty-eight (48) hours after a student returns to campus will convert to an unexcused absence, with no administrative exceptions.*

C. The 14-Day Medical Verification Threshold

To prevent chronic absenteeism and maintain accurate records, any combination of absences or tardies exceeding 30 minutes that totals fourteen (14) instances across a school year for illness, verified only via parental notes or phone calls, will trigger a medical documentation mandate: further illness-related or medical appointment absences and or late arrivals must be verified by a licensed healthcare provider's note.

III. Classification of Absences

A. Excused Absences (California Education Code § 48205)

A pupil shall be excused from school only when an absence is due to a statutorily recognized reason:

- Personal illness.
- Quarantine under the direction of a county or city health officer.
- Medical, dental, optometric, or chiropractic services rendered.
- Attendance at the funeral of an immediate family member (up to one day in-state, three days out-of-state).

- Jury duty.
- Justifiable personal reasons approved in writing by the Principal, including court appearances or observance of a religious holiday, ceremony, or retreat (not to exceed four hours per semester).
- Spending time with an immediate family member who is an active-duty member of the uniformed services called to, on leave from, or returning from a combat zone.
- Attendance at the pupil's own naturalization ceremony.

B. Unexcused Absences

Any absence for a reason not enumerated under Education Code § 48205 is legally unexcused, including family vacations, theme park excursions, non-school sporting events, specialty camps, entertainment industry commitments, and religious observances beyond the statutory four-hour allowance.

IV. Truancy, Habitual Truancy, and Chronic Absenteeism

A. Legal Definitions

- Truant (Ed. Code § 48260): absent or tardy more than 30 minutes without a valid excuse for three (3) full days in a school year.
- Repeatedly Truant (Ed. Code § 48261): a student previously reported truant who is again absent or tardy more than 30 minutes without a valid excuse on one or more subsequent days.
- Habitually Truant (Ed. Code § 48262): a student reported truant three or more times in a school year.
- Chronic Absentee (Ed. Code § 60901(c)(1)): a student absent — excused or unexcused combined — for 10% or more of the school year.

B. Multi-Tiered Truancy Intervention Process

OCASA uses a structured administrative progression to address truancy:

- 1st & 2nd Unexcused Absence/Tardy: electronic notification to parents; teacher check-in.
- 3rd & 4th: Truancy Letter #1; child is legally “Truant.”
- 5th: Truancy Letter #2 with a request for a parent conference; child is now a “Habitual Truant”; mandatory meeting to build an attendance improvement plan.
- 6th: Truancy Letter #3; case referred to the Student Success Team (SST) and to the School Attendance Review Team (SART).

C. SART Attendance Agreement

The parent/guardian participates in a SART meeting and signs an attendance improvement agreement, which may include voluntary parent shadow days, academic progression review, remediation programs, counseling/behavioral support plans, temporary loss of non-instructional privileges, or referral to the District Attorney's office if attendance does not improve.

Prolonged Unexcused Absences & Seat Abandonment

If a student is absent ten (10) or more consecutive days without a valid excuse and the school cannot reach the family despite exhaustive attempts (including certified mail and emergency contacts), the

student will be deemed to have abandoned the enrollment seat. If the family is contactable but remains in unexcused non-compliance with a SART contract, the school will initiate the Involuntary Removal Process described in Section VII below.

V. Start-of-Year Attendance and Enrollment Verification

If a student is absent during the first five (5) consecutive days of the school year: Day 1 triggers a phone call to verify safety and intent to enroll; Day 3 triggers a written warning letter; Day 5 triggers a final phone call, and if no attendance or excused documentation is logged, the school proceeds under the Involuntary Removal Process in Section VII.

VI. Short-Term Independent Study Contracts

A. Eligibility and Advance Notification

For planned extended absences not excused under Ed. Code § 48205, families may apply for a Short-Term Independent Study Contract. A student may be granted a minimum of 4 days and a maximum of fourteen (14) cumulative instructional days of independent study per year; requests must be submitted at least two (2) calendar weeks in advance via ParentSquare to Mission Control.

B. Compliance, Signatures, and Academic Credit

The contract must be signed by the parent/guardian, student, and supervising certificated instructor before coursework begins.

- The student's classroom teacher will compile and issue an academic workload that will be sent home with the student before leave. Students bear full academic responsibility for completing all assignments.
- Upon the student's physical return to campus, the student must immediately submit the completed schoolwork alongside the *Independent Study Work Completion Log* directly to the classroom teacher.
- Attendance credit is granted only in proportion to the volume and quality of academic work turned in upon immediate return. Partial or incomplete work will result in partial attendance credit.

VII. Involuntary Removal Process

Pursuant to the legal provisions governing California public charter schools, no student shall be involuntarily removed, disenrolled, dismissed, or terminated from the school roster for any reason — including attendance policy non-compliance or non-expulsion disciplinary grounds — unless the school strictly executes the following protective framework:

A. Written Notice of Intent to Remove

The school must deliver a formal “Written Notice of Intent to Remove” to the parent, guardian, or educational rights holder no less than five (5) school days prior to the effective date of the intended removal. The notice must be authored in the family's native language, detail the specific violations charged, and explain the family's right to request a formal hearing before the removal takes effect.

B. Hearing Protocols & Stay of Action

- Status Stay: if a hearing request is submitted before the 5-day notice window ends, the student remains fully enrolled and cannot be removed until the school concludes the hearing and issues a final, binding written decision.
- Evidentiary Opportunity: the pupil and their representative may present testimony, submit evidence, call witnesses, and confront/cross-examine adverse witnesses.
- Right to Counsel: the family may bring private legal counsel or an educational advocate at their own expense.

C. Post-Removal Notification Requirement

If a student is ultimately disenrolled, OCASA will transmit an official notice of disenrollment to the student's last known school district of residence within thirty (30) calendar days of the effective date.

Health Office Services, Medical Logs, and Exclusion Standards

I. General Administration and Scope

OCASA maintains a dedicated Health Office to assist students with basic first aid, minor injuries, and approved routine medical needs.

> ***Clinical Disclaimer:*** *The Health Office does not feature a licensed school nurse, physician, or clinical practitioner on staff. Health Office tasks are performed by designated, trained school personnel under strict administrative oversight.*

II. Illness Exclusion and Return Criteria

A. Mandatory Clinical Exclusion

A student will be excluded from campus if they exhibit a fever of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher, active vomiting or diarrhea, or advanced symptoms of an active communicable disease.

B. The 24-Hour Recovery Rule

A student sent home for fever, vomiting, or diarrhea may return only after a full twenty-four (24) hours have passed since the last active episode, without the assistance of fever-reducing or anti-nausea/anti-diarrheal medication.

C. Beyond the Stars (BTS) Program

The Beyond the Stars (BTS) before/after-school program maintains its own medical authorization log and medication check-in process, held to the same compliance standards described below.

III. OCASA & BTS Mandatory Medical Documentation and Logs

In compliance with California Education Code § 49423, unlicensed school personnel may only assist a student with medication if the school has received explicit, written authorization. The following logs are maintained for any student requiring medication access on campus:

1. Medical Authorization Log

A formal OCASA Medication Authorization Form must be signed by both the parent/guardian and the student's licensed physician before any prescription or over-the-counter medication can be received, stored, or handled by staff. This authorization must be renewed annually.

2. Medication Check-In Sheet

Filled out by school/program personnel when medication is delivered to campus. Students may not transport or carry medications to school for check-in. All medications must arrive in their original pharmacy container with an intact, legible prescription label showing the student's name, dosage, administration route, timing, prescriber contact information, and expiration date.

3. Medication Administration Record (MAR)

Every dose administered on campus or by BTS is logged immediately, including date, time, dose, administering staff signature, and any notable observations.

IV. Crucial Campus Safety Protocols

A. First Dose Policy

The first dose of any new medication or adjusted dosage must be administered at home, so the student can be monitored for adverse reactions in a controlled environment before returning to school.

B. Self-Administration of Emergency Lifesaving Medications

In accordance with **California Education Code §§ 49423 and 49423.1** (self-administration of asthma inhalers) and **§ 49414** (epinephrine auto-injectors), students are prohibited from carrying medications on their person or in their cubbies, with the sole exception of lifesaving emergency items such as asthma inhalers or epinephrine auto-injectors (EpiPens).

To qualify for independent self-carry and self-administration, families must have on file: a valid, written physician's order certifying the student is trained to self-administer the device, along with parental consent. Approved emergency medications must be kept in a dedicated, clearly marked medical pouch — never loose in clothing pockets.

C. End-of-Year Disposal Mandate

The school will not store medications across summer recess. Any unclaimed medications remaining on campus forty-eight (48) hours after the close of the school year will be destroyed in accordance with state medical waste disposal protocols.

V. Mandated State Health Screenings

In accordance with California Education Code §§ 49452 and 49455, OCASA conducts mandatory hearing and vision screenings annually for designated elementary grade levels. Parents will receive notice via ParentSquare, and a parent/guardian may file a signed written statement opting out of these screenings at the beginning of each school year.

VI. Pediculosis (Head Lice) Management Policy

OCASA maintains an evidence-based “management and treatment” protocol aligned with California Department of Public Health and CDC guidance. Routine school-wide head checks are not conducted, as they cause undue stigma without reducing transmission; individual student privacy is protected, though a discreet classroom exposure advisory may be issued if a cluster of cases (multiple independent instances within 14 days) is identified.

VII. Overnight Field Trip Medication Requirements

For overnight field trips, parents must obtain a separate, original prescription bottle specifically for the trip window, with the exact number of dosages required precut/measured if required— no more, no less. Staff will verify the count against the label at check-in; non-compliant containers will be rejected. Medical Authorization Forms will be required to administer all field trip medications.

Field Trips and Off-Campus Excursions

I. Academic Integration and Authorization

Field trips are considered a formal component of the school's academic curriculum. All notifications, medical releases, and permission slips are distributed and submitted exclusively through ParentSquare, by the deadline published there.

Statutory Liability Waiver (California Ed. Code § 35330)

In accordance with California Education Code § 35330(d), all participants in a school-sponsored field trip are deemed by law to have waived all claims against OCASA, the school district, and the State of California for injury, accident, illness, or death occurring during or as a result of the field trip.

II. Behavioral and Dress Code Expectations

All standard school rules and the Student Code of Conduct remain in effect for the entire duration of any off-campus excursion. Students must wear standard uniform attire or specifically designated field trip apparel unless an alternative dress code is authorized in writing.

III. Participation and Exclusion Criteria

Participation in field trips is a privilege and may be contingent on academic, behavioral, and attendance standing. The Executive Director, Principal, or designee may exclude a student to ensure safety, supervision, or policy compliance — for example, due to an unresolved safety risk, disciplinary history, code of conduct violation, or an active SART review.

Mandated On-Campus Alternative Placement

If a student is excluded from a field trip, the school will provide a supervised, equitable alternative educational program on campus for that day, with an academic workload matching the rigor of the off-campus peer group.

IV. Medical and Dietary Accommodations

A designated, trained employee will serve as the temporary custodian of student medications during the trip; only medications backed by a fully executed Medical Authorization Log will be transported. Students authorized to self-carry emergency items must keep their medical pouch on their person at all times. The campus food service will provide packed, nutritionally compliant lunches for students who rely on the California Universal Meals Program and request one prior to departure.

Personalized Learning Plans (PLP)

I. Overview & Philosophy

Every OCASA student has a Personalized Learning Plan (PLP) that documents academic goals, competencies, and growth areas across the year.

II. Revision and Mandatory Update Cycle

- Semi-Annual Update Mandate: PLPs are formally reviewed and updated at least twice per year.
- Mid-Year Alignment Check: teachers conduct an informal alignment check mid-year to confirm the plan still reflects the student's current needs.
- Goal Setting Conferences: students present their own PLP progress to their family at scheduled conferences.

III. Holistic Data-Driven Development

- Academic Data & Competencies: standards-based mastery data and formative assessment results.
- Socio-Emotional Frameworks: SEL competency growth and reflection.
- Behavioral Growth & Stewardship: STAR expectation growth and self-management goals.

IV. Legal Safeguards and Statutory Compliance

> ***Special Education & Section 504 Primacy:*** *For any student with a documented disability receiving services under IDEA or Section 504, the legally mandated IEP or 504 Plan takes precedence over the PLP. All PLP targets, academic strategies, and behavioral accommodations must be fully subordinate to, and aligned with, the student's binding IEP or 504 documentation.*

Student Records Privacy (FERPA & SOPIPA)

PLP data is protected as an education record under FERPA and, where applicable, the Student Online Personal Information Protection Act (SOPIPA). See the FERPA section of this handbook for the complete privacy framework governing all student records, including PLP data.

General Campus Operations, Academic Integrity, and Stewardship

I. General Campus Bulletins and Property

A. Posters, Flyer Distribution, and Advertisements

All flyers, posters, or advertisements distributed on campus or sent home must be pre-approved by administration.

B. Lost and Found

Unclaimed lost-and-found items are periodically donated to charity; families are encouraged to label student belongings clearly.

II. Student Financial Accounts and Debt Resolutions

A. Resolution Protocols and Statutory Boundaries

Outstanding student fees, fines, or debts are addressed through direct family communication and payment plans where appropriate, consistent with statutory limits on charging pupils for participation in educational activities.

B. Returned Checks and Electronic Payments

A returned check or failed electronic payment may result in a processing fee and a requirement to use verified payment methods going forward.

III. Comprehensive Academic Honesty Policy

A. Core Scholarship Principles

OCASA expects all students to produce original work and give proper credit for the ideas and contributions of others.

B. Definitions of Academic Misconduct

- Plagiarism: presenting another's work or ideas as one's own without attribution.
- Unauthorized Collaboration: completing individually assessed work with unapproved assistance.
- Fabrication: inventing data, sources, or results.
- Cheating: using unauthorized materials or assistance during an assessment.

C. Collaborative Learning vs. Assessed Work

Teachers will clearly distinguish between assignments designed for collaboration and those requiring independent, individually assessed work.

D. Progressive Disciplinary Matrix for Misconduct

- Tier 1 — Initial Classroom Infraction: teacher conference, redo opportunity, parent notification.
- Tier 2 — Secondary or Escalated Infraction: administrative conference, academic consequence, documented behavior plan.

- Tier 3 — Severe or Repeated Non-Compliance: formal disciplinary referral per the Student Code of Conduct.

IV. Campus Library Operations and Circulation Policy

A. Library Space and Class Visits

Classes visit the library on a rotating schedule; independent visits require teacher permission.

B. Circulation Controls

Books are checked out for a standard two-week period and may be renewed if not on hold for another student.

V. Lost or Damaged Materials Policy

A. Conversion of Status from Overdue to Lost

A book overdue beyond the grace period is converted to “lost” status and billed at replacement cost.

B. Replacement Fee Structures

Replacement fees reflect the actual cost of the item; families are notified in writing before a fee is assessed.

C. Fee Payment Receipts and Refund Eligibility

If a “lost” item is later found and returned in good condition before a replacement has been purchased, the family may be eligible for a refund.

D. Evaluation of Irreparable Negligent Damage

Damage beyond normal wear (e.g., water damage, torn-out pages, ink/marker damage) is billed at full replacement cost.

E. Withdrawal/Student Exit Protocol

All library materials must be returned or resolved financially before a withdrawing student's records are released.

Digital Technology, Acceptable Use, and Telecommunications

I. iPad and Hardware Classroom Management

A. Academic Purpose Baseline

School-issued iPads, laptops, and local hardware are reserved for academic pursuits, computational thinking, and project-based research.

B. Device Handling and Environmental Safeguards

- No food, liquids, or gum permitted near devices in use.
- Students may not handle school computers/iPads without a credentialed staff member supervising.
- Music, streaming, or video audio requires explicit teacher permission for an academic task.
- Students are responsible for saving work to their assigned school-managed Google Drive account; OCASA is not liable for data loss from hardware malfunction.
- Downloading or side-loading unauthorized apps or software is prohibited; unauthorized files will be wiped without prior notice.

II. Network Infrastructure and Acceptable Use Policy (AUP)

A. Core Educational Provision

OCASA provides network access to further its science, arts, and project-based curriculum. Access is a privilege that carries individual responsibility.

> ***Federal CIPA Compliance:*** *In compliance with the federal Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA), OCASA protects its network through active, server-side content filters that block obscene material, child pornography, and material otherwise harmful to minors, and audits online activity to maintain a CIPA-compliant environment.*

B. Network Opportunities and Curricular Utilities

Authorized use includes academic research, moderated discussion boards, coding projects, distance learning modules, and publishing school-related curriculum projects.

C. Inspection Rights and Diminished Privacy Expectations

School-owned devices and network accounts do not carry the same privacy expectations as personal electronics. Emails, chat logs, search queries, shared files, and browsing history on school systems may be reviewed by IT management or administration at any time to verify compliance and maintain system stability.

III. Prohibited Online Conduct and Disciplinary Actions

A. Categorized Violations

- Unauthorized installation, storage, or distribution of copyrighted software, text, or media.
- Commercial exploitation of school network resources for personal financial gain.

- Unauthorized political campaigning or partisan lobbying using school electronic services.
- Accessing, searching for, or distributing pornographic or obscene material as defined under California Penal Code § 313(a).
- Using another's credentials without authorization, or sharing your own with another student.
- Disseminating private personal identifiers of peers or staff, or attempting to breach secured school files.
- Purposefully altering, disrupting, or destroying school hardware, network routing, or cloud storage.

B. Enforcement Framework

Violations may result in loss of network/device privileges, suspension per the Student Code of Conduct, and referral to law enforcement where statutory lines are crossed.

IV. Personal Electronic Devices (Cell Phones & Smartwatches)

In accordance with **California Education Code § 48901.7** (the Phone-Free Schools Act), OCASA enforces a lock-away policy for student smartphones and personal electronic devices during the instructional school day.

A. The Backpack Mandate

Upon arriving on campus, all student cell phones and personal electronic devices must be turned off or set to silent and placed entirely inside the student's enclosed backpack. Devices must remain in backpacks for the entire academic day, including lunch, recess, and passing periods. Auxiliary accessories (Bluetooth earbuds, wired headphones, wireless headsets) must also be powered off and stored out of sight.

B. Statutory Exceptions

Consistent with Education Code § 48901.7, a student may carry or operate a personal device on campus only under the following legally required conditions:

- Emergency Use: during an actual emergency or threat to campus safety.
- Medical Necessity: when a licensed physician determines the device is essential for the student's physical health or medical monitoring.
- IEP/504 Accommodation: when the device is explicitly required in the student's active IEP or Section 504 Plan.

C. Smart Watch Restrictions

Smart watches may be worn for timekeeping only; if a student uses one to send/receive messages, play games, or access social media during class, it will be surrendered to the classroom teacher for the remainder of the day.

D. Progressive Confiscation Matrix

- First Offense: device confiscated and held at the teacher's desk until the end of the instructional day; a behavioral incident is logged.
- Second Offense: device sent to Mission Control; student retrieves it at the close of the school day.
- Repeated Offenses: device released only to a verified parent/guardian; student may face a temporary ban on bringing personal electronics to campus.

E. Mandatory Communication Channel

Parents needing to reach a student with urgent, time-sensitive information should route the message through the front office rather than texting or calling the student's personal device directly.

Student Success Team & Multi-Tiered System of Supports

I. Foundations of the Student Success Team (SST)

A. Purpose and Philosophy

OCASA administrators, credentialed faculty, and specialized support staff proactively partner with families to build tailored, data-driven strategies for student growth using the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) framework, addressing academic achievement, behavioral stability, and social-emotional learning.

The MTSS Tiered Framework

Support Level	Instructional Focus	Target Audience
Tier 1 — Universal Support	High-quality, differentiated core classroom instruction and school-wide positive behavior systems.	~80–90% of all students
Tier 2 — Supplemental Support	Targeted, small-group interventions, specialized academic workshops, or standard behavioral contracts.	~5–15% of students needing extra support
Tier 3 — Intensive Support	Highly individualized, one-on-one interventions and custom action plans.	~1–5% of students with the highest level of need

B. Defining the Student Success Team

The SST is a multidisciplinary, solution-oriented general education team that uses a collaborative, problem-solving approach to assist students experiencing persistent obstacles. The school, home, and community coordinate efforts so a student can thrive academically, socially, and behaviorally.

C. Composition of the Team

- The student's primary general education classroom teacher(s).
- The campus Principal or designated administrative proxy.
- The student's parent(s) or legal guardian(s).
- The student, when age-appropriate.
- As needed: counselors, instructional coaches, intervention coordinators, speech-language pathologists, or the school psychologist.

II. The SST Referral and Meeting Process

A. Triggers for an SST Assembly

An SST meeting is considered when Tier 1 and standard Tier 2 classroom interventions have not yielded desired growth, and there remain significant, documented concerns regarding academic stagnation, social-emotional challenges, attendance obstacles, or retention consideration.

B. Initiating a Referral

Meetings can be initiated by school staff (with tracking data showing insufficient progress) or by parents/guardians (who observe academic or behavioral distress at home and want to unify strategies with the school).

III. Statutory Boundaries and Special Education Alignments

A. Pre-Referral General Education Context

The SST is fundamentally a general education function, used to evaluate school-wide instruction and apply targeted interventions before a student falls critically behind.

B. Relationship to Special Education and Federal Child Find

> ***Special Education & Child Find Mandate Compliance:*** *In compliance with IDEA and California's "Child Find" obligations, the SST process may never be used to delay, stall, or deny a formal assessment for Special Education eligibility. A parent or legal guardian retains the right to request a formal Special Education or Section 504 evaluation in writing at any time, independent of where the student stands in the SST process.*

For a written request for an **initial special education assessment**, OCASA will issue an Assessment Plan within the state-mandated fifteen (15) calendar-day timeline (Education Code § 56043(a)).

For a written request for a **Section 504 evaluation**, federal law does not set a fixed statutory deadline; Section 504 requires the evaluation process to be completed within a reasonable period of time. As a matter of school practice, OCASA aims to begin the 504 evaluation process on the same timeline used for special education referrals.

IV. Multi-Tiered Support Action Protocols

The responsible parties and core actions at each tier are summarized below.

Tier	Responsible Parties	Core Actions
Tier 1 (All Students)	Teachers and Instructional Assistants (IAs)	High-quality classroom instruction; firm, fair, predictable behavior management; positive de-escalation; effective classroom design; proactive parent communication.
Tier 2 (Some Students)	Classroom Teachers, IAs, Education Specialists, Site Administrators	Check-In/Check-Out (CICO); structured social/emotional/behavioral lessons (STAR 101); localized behavior contracts; behavior support plans, daily parent communication logs; collaborative goal setting.
Tier 3 (Few Students)	Teachers, IAs, Counselors, BCBAs, Behavior Intervention Assistants, School Psychologists, Education Specialists, Site Administrators	Daily customized CICO tracked with parents; peer/conflict mediation; formal Behavior Intervention Plan; convening the IEP/504 team for accommodations and follow-up review.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

I. Core Parental Rights Under FERPA

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 C.F.R. Part 99) is a federal law protecting the privacy of student education records. These rights transfer entirely to the student once they turn 18.

- Right to Inspect: parents may inspect and review their child's complete educational records. OCASA will comply with an inspection request within five (5) business days of a written application.
- Right to Request Amendment: parents may request correction of records they believe are inaccurate, misleading, or in violation of privacy rights. If the school declines, parents have a right to a formal local hearing.
- Right to Consent: the school must obtain written parental consent before disclosing personally identifiable information (PII) from a student's record, except to school officials with legitimate educational interests or when transferring records to another enrolling school.

II. Directory Information Framework and Disclosure Policy

FERPA allows local educational agencies to release "Directory Information" without prior written consent, provided the school gives annual notice of the designations and a reasonable opt-out window. The primary purpose is to allow OCASA to celebrate student achievements and document community milestones in publications such as playbills, yearbooks, honor rolls, commencement programs, and athletic rosters.

III. External Disclosure Rules and Charter-Specific Provisions

State and federal law permits disclosure of directory information to external requestors, except where the receiving party intends commercial use.

> ***OCASA Restrictive Privacy Stance:*** *Beyond the specific statutory military and charter-advocacy exceptions below, it is OCASA's policy never to release directory information to any external requester, for any purpose, without explicit, individual parent/guardian written consent on a case-by-case basis.*

Mandatory Federal Military Recruiter Requirements

Under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended (currently reauthorized as the Every Student Succeeds Act), OCASA is required to provide military recruiters, upon request, with the names, addresses, and telephone listings of secondary students, unless a parent/guardian submits a written opt-out.

Charter Advocacy Disclosure

As a specific exception to OCASA's restrictive stance, OCASA will release directory information to verified external requestors engaged in political advocacy, lobbying, or public information dissemination related to the support and growth of California charter schools, including organizations such as the California Charter Schools Association (CCSA) Advocates. Families who wish to prevent this use must submit a formal written opt-out.

IV. Designated Directory Information Categories

OCASA officially designates the following as Directory Information. Any data point not on this list remains confidential under standard FERPA guidelines:

- Parents'/guardians' names, physical/mailing addresses, email addresses, and phone numbers.
- Official dates of school attendance.
- Participation in officially recognized school activities, clubs, and athletic teams (including height/weight for competitive athletic team members).
- Degrees, academic honors, scholarship awards, and student achievements.
- The name of the most recent public, private, or charter educational agency previously attended.

V. Parental “Opt-Out” Procedure

A parent or legal guardian who does not want OCASA to disclose directory information, contact data, or family markers to external requestors or charter advocacy organizations without prior written consent must submit a Directory Information Opt-Out Form to Mission Control.

> ***Annual Submission Deadline:*** *Failure to submit a signed written opt-out notice by the October 15 deadline of each school year serves as an implied authorization for OCASA to release designated directory data during that academic school year.*

Multi-Tiered System of Supports & Behavior Plan

At OCASA Elementary, we are committed to a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) that ensures every student receives the academic, behavioral, and social-emotional support they need to succeed. Through a Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) framework, we intentionally teach, model, and reinforce the behaviors that create a safe, inclusive, and high-performing learning environment.

Behavioral expectations apply to all students. Students with IEPs or 504 Plans are expected to follow the same STAR expectations as their peers; when additional support is needed, the school team adjusts interventions, accommodations, or services, not the expectations themselves.

I. The STAR Framework

- **S — Safe:** we create a safe environment by explicitly teaching and reinforcing behaviors that protect emotional and physical well-being. We teach students to be Upstanders — to step in safely or alert staff if a conflict starts.
- **T — Thoughtful:** we cultivate thoughtfulness by building students' social-emotional competencies and sense of belonging. We teach students to be Upstanders — to include other students.
- **A — Accountable:** we develop accountability by supporting students in taking ownership of their learning and behavior. We teach students to be Upstanders — to refuse to laugh at, join in on, or spread gossip.
- **R — Respectful:** we model and expect respectful interactions and consistent expectations across all settings. We teach students to be Upstanders — to lift up others who are struggling.

II. Proactive Behavioral Strategies

- Explicit Behavioral Instruction: teachers actively teach, model, and practice each STAR expectation throughout the year.
- Collaborative Rules: students and instructors co-develop classroom rules that align with schoolwide STAR expectations.
- Pre-Correction Methods: staff anticipate and prevent escalation by offering structured support before a known trigger.
- Engaging, Adaptive Instruction: culturally responsive pacing with multiple opportunities to respond.
- Non-Verbal Redirection: proximity, auditory/visual cues, and gestures redirect minor misbehavior quietly.
- High Praise-to-Correction Ratios: staff maintain at least a 4:1 ratio of positive acknowledgments to corrections.
- Relationship Building: staff prioritize positive teacher-student relationships to support adjustment, social skills, and academic resilience.

III. Multi-Tier Continuum of Consequences

Minor behavioral challenges are handled directly by the teacher using brief, neutral corrective statements and immediate feedback. Major or persistent issues are referred to administration.

Consequences Intervention Menu — Classroom Managed

Level (Weekly)	Celebrated Consequences Menu	Corrective Consequences Menu
1 — Baseline	Behavior-Specific Praise	Re-teaching; warning/proximity; strategic seating changes; natural consequences
2 — Supplemental	Behavior-Specific Praise; STAR Ticket allocation; Positive Behavior Points	Deduction of 1 behavior point; Restorative Reflection Time; loss of a school privilege; educational opportunities
3 — Targeted	Behavior-Specific Praise; STAR Ticket allocation; Positive Behavior Points; positive note home (ParentSquare or handwritten)	Deduction of a second behavior point; Restorative Reflection Time; reflection sheet; loss of privileges; educational opportunities; parent contact
4 — Intensive	Behavior-Specific Praise; additional positive points; positive note home; prize box; student-constructed message on ParentSquare	Deduction of a second behavior point; Restorative Reflection Time; reflection sheet; loss of privileges; educational opportunities; Temporary assignment to a Buddy Classroom for an independent reflection sheet; parent contact
5 — Administrative	Reward celebration event	Deduction of a second behavior point; Restorative Reflection Time; reflection sheet; loss of privileges; educational opportunities; Office Discipline Referral and enrollment in STAR 101; parent contact

STAR 101: Positive Behavior Support & Skill Building

STAR 101 is a PBIS-aligned intervention class that re-teaches expectations, strengthens student skills, and supports positive behavior choices. Students receiving an office referral are automatically enrolled to reflect, reset, and return to class ready for success, through targeted instruction in social skills, self-management, and interpersonal problem-solving.

STAR 101 is a Tier 2 PBIS support, not a consequence. It provides coaching and structured practice so students can build confidence and make positive choices.

> ***Statutory Due Process Notice:*** *In accordance with California law (Education Code § 48900.5), suspension or expulsion may only be used as a last resort for severe behavioral infractions or when all "other means of correction" have been deployed, documented, and proven ineffective. Immediate suspension is limited to the emergency, safety-threatening offenses detailed in Education Code § 48900.*

Consequences Intervention Menu — Administrative Managed

All administrative interventions include due process.

Level (Quarterly)	Celebrated Consequences Menu	Corrective Consequences Menu
1 — Admin Intake	Behavior-Specific Praise	Mandatory STAR 101; classroom consequence; student-administrator conference; explicit review of STAR expectations; student reflection log; phone/ParentSquare notification; depending on severity, suspension/expulsion consideration
2 — Targeted Restorative Intervention	Behavior-Specific Praise; STAR Ticket allocation; Positive Behavior Points	All Tier 1 admin interventions above, plus: community service (campus restoration/beautification); restorative circle with affected peers or staff
3 — Intensive Support (Tier 2 referral)	Behavior-Specific Praise; STAR Ticket allocation; Positive Behavior Points; positive note home	All Tier 1 admin interventions above, plus: mandatory parent-administrator-teacher conference; Tier 2 behavior supports; formal SST referral; positive behavior contract; behavior goal-setting plan; temporary loss of field trip privileges

IV. Shared Rewards and Behavior Incentive Framework

A. STAR Tickets

Students observed following school rules and modeling appropriate behavior are recognized with STAR Tickets, redeemable for school-sanctioned privileges.

- 50 Tickets: official certificate and photo displayed during morning announcements.
- 75 Tickets: commemorative photograph at the monthly PBIS Assembly.
- 100 Tickets: feature photograph in the Principal's family newsletter.
- Students exhibiting exemplary character over an extended duration may be nominated for the campus SHINING STAR Award.

B. Additional Incentive Channels

- Positive ParentSquare messages sent directly to families.
- Positive Behavior Points.
- Fun Friday celebration activities and access to the STAR Ticket Store.

V. Psychological and Function-Based Behavioral Interventions

Administrators and teachers focus on the underlying function of a behavior (e.g., avoiding a task vs. seeking attention) and are trained to avoid interventions that inadvertently reinforce negative behavior, such as using suspension for an escape-maintained classroom behavior.

Clinical and Mental Health Accommodations

For students whose behavioral challenges stem from psychological or emotional distress, interventions prioritize cognitive-behavioral strategies and self-regulation techniques; every classroom has a calming corner. If an anxiety disorder manifests as avoidance of a school activity, staff emphasize targeted exposure, relaxation training, and coping mechanisms rather than removing the student from the learning environment.

Student Code of Conduct & Disciplinary Procedures

I. Foundational Governance and Scope

OCASA establishes clear, predictable, and legally sound policies to maintain an educational environment reflecting the school's mission, core values, and scientific spirit. Effective governance provides the structural framework and psychological safety necessary for students to develop their academic and creative skills.

Boundaries of Jurisdictional Reach

1. On-Campus Settings

Expectations apply during all school hours and in all school-controlled spaces: buildings, classrooms, labs, playgrounds, lunch areas, recess fields, restrooms, and all school grounds.

2. In-Transit Settings

Jurisdiction extends to travel connected to the school day: traveling to/from school, designated pick-up/drop-off zones, and school-sanctioned buses or vans.

3. Off-Campus Nexus Settings

OCASA may address off-campus behavior, digital or real-world, when it has a clear connection to the school community or creates a substantial disruption to learning.

II. Extension of Jurisdiction & Digital Speech Limits

A. The Off-Campus “School Nexus” (California Ed. Code § 48900(s))

The school's disciplinary jurisdiction extends to misconduct occurring entirely outside school hours and off school property, provided the behavior creates a direct, documented connection (“nexus”) to the campus.

B. Constitutional Guardrails for Digital and Off-Campus Speech

OCASA may administer discipline for off-campus, real-world, or digital actions only when the behavior:

- Threatens or causes a material and substantial disruption to the educational environment or orderly school operations.
- Invades the constitutional or civil rights of other students or staff, including creating a hostile, intimidating, or psychologically unsafe learning environment.
- Threatens the physical health, structural safety, or well-being of the school community through targeted harassment, true threats, or severe cyberbullying.

Off-campus speech that is merely offensive, controversial, or politically divergent is not subject to school discipline unless it breaches the substantial-disruption or targeted-harassment bars above.

III. Restorative Justice and Discipline Philosophy

Discipline at OCASA is defined as a student's developing capacity to self-regulate, manage emotional triggers, and cooperate with community expectations — never as a purely punitive or exclusionary mechanism.

- Restorative Inquiries: What happened? Who was impacted? What needs to be done to make things right?
- Harm-Repair Agreements: students collaborate with staff to design a tangible project, apology, or service that repairs the environment or relationship.
- Restorative Resolution Circles: facilitated by trained counselors or administrators, allowing affected peers and staff to voice impact directly and build accountability.

IV. Student Bill of Rights

1. Right to Authentic Self-Expression

Every student may safely express their individuality, cultural identity, and perspectives within the bounds of the dress code and school safety parameters.

2. Right to Dignity and Respect

Every student has the right to be treated with kindness, equity, and professionalism by peers and staff.

3. Right to a Safe Educational Sanctuary

Every student has the right to a physically, emotionally, and digitally secure environment free from bullying, discrimination, or intimidation.

4. Right to Administrative Due Process

Before any formal disciplinary consequence, every student has the right to be informed of the reasons, present their perspective and evidence, and receive a fair, neutral investigation.

Harassment, Intimidation, Discrimination, and Bullying Prevention

I. Policy Statement and Core Philosophy

The Board of Directors of OCASA is committed to maintaining a safe, civil, and inclusive learning environment. OCASA strictly prohibits acts of discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying related to any school activity, campus operation, or instructional block.

Scope and Jurisdictional Application

1. On-Campus Conduct

Applies to behavior on school grounds and facilities, during school-sponsored events, and in transit areas connected to the school day.

2. School-Connected Digital Networks

Applies to school-owned software, Google Classroom, learning portals, or school-managed WiFi and devices — treated the same as on-campus behavior.

3. Off-Campus or Personal Device Conduct

OCASA may intervene when off-campus or personal-device conduct has a clear connection to the school community or creates a substantial disruption to learning.

II. Prohibited Conduct and Protected Characteristics

A. General Protected Statuses

"Discrimination, harassment, intimidation, and bullying" describes intentional conduct targeted at an individual based on actual or perceived: disability; gender, gender identity, or gender expression; nationality, citizenship, race, color, or ethnicity; religion or creed; sexual orientation; or association with a person or group having one of these characteristics.

B. Specific Sex- and Gender-Based Prohibitions

Other prohibited behaviors that may constitute unlawful sexual harassment include unwelcome sexual advances or propositions, verbal abuse or degrading words of a sexual nature, graphic comments about appearance, sexually suggestive gestures or images, statements/slurs constituting hate crimes, and retaliation against a complainant or witness.

III. Legal and Statutory Definitions

- Bullying (EC § 48900(r)): severe or pervasive physical or verbal conduct, including written or electronic communications, that constitutes sexual harassment, hate violence, or creates an intimidating or hostile educational environment, and which reasonably places a pupil in fear of harm, causes detrimental effect on physical/mental health, or substantially interferes with academic performance or participation in school activities.
- Cyberbullying: an electronic act transmitting harassing communication, direct threats, or harmful content via the internet or digital platforms, including unauthorized access/hacking of another's account or digital identity assumption.

- Electronic Act: transmission of a communication (messages, sounds, images, posts, video, or deepfakes) using an electronic device.
- Reasonable Pupil: a pupil, including one with exceptional needs, exercising the judgment expected of a person of their age under similar circumstances.

IV. Reporting and Investigation Procedures

A. Staff Obligations and Intervention

Staff who witness or become aware of discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying must intervene as soon as safely possible, call for assistance, and log the incident to administration within 24 hours.

B. Student, Parent, and Community Reporting Pathways

- Students should notify a teacher, counselor, or administrator immediately if they feel targeted.
- Parents, guardians, volunteers, and visitors are encouraged to report suspected violations directly to the Principal.
- A written Incident Report Form is encouraged but not required; oral reports are accepted and investigated.
- Reports may be filed anonymously, though formal disciplinary action cannot be based solely on anonymous information without corroborating evidence.

C. Investigation Timeline Workflow

- Day 1: incident report filed with the Principal or designee.
- Within 48 hours: formal investigation opened — witness interviews, digital logs, and cross-check under the Uniform Complaint Procedures (UCP) where applicable.
- Within 30 school days: resolution and determination, unless an extension is documented for extenuating circumstances.
- Immediately upon closure: complainant notified of the determination, consistent with FERPA limits on disclosing another student's disciplinary information.

D. Appeals Process

A dissatisfied complainant may file a written appeal with the Designated Appeals Committee within five (5) school days of the resolution notice. An independent panel of at least three certificated employees, unfamiliar with the case, will conduct a confidential review and render a final disposition.

Pupil Suspension and Expulsion Policy & Procedures

I. Governing Framework & General Policy Mandates

This policy is established in strict accordance with **California Education Code § 47605(c)(5)(J)** to promote a safe, supportive, and scientifically oriented learning environment at OCASA. It integrates the statutory framework of California Education Code § 48900 et seq., which outlines student offenses, procedural timelines, and administrative protections. This document serves as OCASA's official protocol and may be amended by the Board of Directors without a formal charter petition amendment, provided all updates comply with state legislation.

A. Core Protections and Safeguards

- Corporal Punishment Prohibition: strictly prohibited at all times, including the willful infliction of physical pain upon a student. This does not include a staff member's use of reasonable, necessary force to protect themselves, students, staff, or others, or to prevent serious damage to school property.
- Equitable Discipline: OCASA staff will enforce disciplinary rules, interventions, and procedures fairly, reasonably, and consistently among all students.
- Activity Exclusion: suspended or expelled students are excluded from all regular classroom instruction, campus grounds, and school-sponsored on/off-campus activities for the duration of the disciplinary term.
- Special Education & Section 504 Safeguards: students identified with disabilities, or for whom OCASA has a prior basis of knowledge of a suspected disability, are subject to the same disciplinary grounds below, but are protected by additional federal and state due-process mandates — see “Special Procedures for the Consideration of Suspension and Expulsion of Students with Disabilities” later in this section.

II. Jurisdictional Reach and Scope of Conduct

A student may be suspended or recommended for expulsion if the misconduct is directly related to a school activity or attendance occurring at any time, including: while on school grounds; while traveling to or from school; during, traveling to, or returning from a school-sponsored or charter-sanctioned activity; or entirely off-campus and outside school hours if the behavior creates a direct connection (“nexus”) to the campus by threatening a material disruption or invading student rights.

III. Enumerated Student Offenses

A. Discretionary Suspension Offenses

OCASA administration may suspend a student if it is determined the pupil has committed any of the following:

- Caused, attempted to cause, or threatened to cause physical injury to another person.
- Willfully used force or violence upon another person, except in clear self-defense.

- Unlawfully possessed, used, sold, furnished, or was under the influence of any controlled substance (CA Health & Safety Code §§ 11053–11058), alcoholic beverage, or intoxicant of any kind.
- Unlawfully offered, arranged, or negotiated to sell any controlled substance, alcoholic beverage, or intoxicant, and delivered a substitute liquid or material represented as the prohibited substance.
- Committed or attempted to commit robbery or extortion.
- Caused or attempted to cause damage to school property or private property.
- Stole or attempted to steal school property or private property (including knowingly receiving stolen property).
- Possessed or used tobacco, nicotine, or delivery products, including electronic vape devices (excluding approved student prescriptions).
- Committed an obscene act or engaged in habitual profanity or vulgarity.
- Unlawfully possessed, offered, arranged, or negotiated to sell drug paraphernalia (CA Health & Safety Code § 11014.5).
- Possessed any knife or other dangerous object of no reasonable use to the pupil (no minimum blade length applies to this discretionary offense; see the Non-Discretionary list below for the separate, statutorily defined "brandishing" offense).
- Possessed an imitation firearm (a replica substantially similar in physical properties to an operational firearm).
- Committed or attempted to commit a sexual assault or sexual battery (CA Penal Code §§ 261, 266c, 286, 288, 288a, 289, or 243.4) that does not otherwise meet the non-discretionary standard below.
- Harassed, threatened, or intimidated a student who is a complaining witness or witness in a school disciplinary proceeding to prevent them from testifying, or retaliated against them for acting as a witness.
- Unlawfully offered, arranged to sell, negotiated to sell, or sold the prescription drug Carisoprodol (Soma).
- Engaged in or attempted to engage in hazing.
- Made terrorist threats against school officials, school property, or personal property within the school environment.
- Committed sexual harassment (Grades 4–8, where severe or pervasive enough to create a hostile educational environment).
- Caused, attempted to cause, threatened to cause, or participated in an act of hate violence (Grades 4–8, as defined in CA Education Code § 233).
- Intentionally harassed, threatened, or intimidated a student or group of students to a degree that materially disrupts classwork, creates substantial disorder, or invades student rights (Grades 4–8).
- Engaged in an act of bullying, including cyberbullying via electronic transmission.
- Aided or abetted the infliction or attempted infliction of physical injury to another person.

- Possessed, sold, or otherwise furnished any knife, locking blade, dirk, or dagger with a blade exceeding 2½ inches, without prior written permission from a certificated school employee with the Principal's concurrence (this is a distinct, lower threshold used for the base discretionary possession offense under Ed. Code § 48900(b); see the Non-Discretionary list for the separate statutory "brandishing" definition).

Mandatory Statutory Exemption: Willful Defiance (SB 419 / EC § 48900(k))

In accordance with California Education Code § 48900(k), as amended by SB 419 (2019), students in Kindergarten through Grade 8 may not be suspended, and no student in Kindergarten through Grade 12 may be recommended for expulsion, for acts of "willful defiance" or general school disruption. Teachers and administrators must use non-exclusionary responses — restorative practices, MTSS Tier 2/3 supports, and function-based behavioral interventions — to address defiance or disruption without removing the student from school.

Voluntary Disclosure Protection (AB 2711 / EC §§ 48900, 48901.1)

Consistent with AB 2711 (2024), a student enrolled at OCASA shall not be suspended solely for voluntarily disclosing — in order to seek help through services or support — their own use of a tobacco product, controlled substance, alcohol, or any intoxicant. This protection applies to the disclosure itself; it does not shield a student from suspension for separate, independently substantiated conduct (e.g., distribution or possession discovered through other means).

B. Non-Discretionary (Mandatory) Suspension & Expulsion Offenses

Under California Education Code § 48915(c), OCASA administration must suspend a student and recommend expulsion if it is determined the pupil committed any of the following — commonly known as the "Big Five" mandatory offenses:

- Possessing, selling, or otherwise furnishing any firearm.
- Brandishing a knife at another person — defined under Ed. Code § 48915(g) as any dirk, dagger, or other weapon with a fixed, sharpened stabbing blade; a weapon with a blade longer than 3½ inches; a folding knife with a blade that locks into place; or a razor with an unguarded blade.
- Unlawfully selling a controlled substance listed in Health & Safety Code §§ 11053–11058.
- Committing or attempting to commit a sexual assault, or committing a sexual battery, as defined in Education Code § 48900(n).
- Possession of an explosive (a "destructive device" as described in 18 U.S.C. § 921).

Federal Gun-Free Schools Act Mandate

If the Administrative Panel and/or Board of Directors determines a student brought a firearm or destructive device onto campus, the student shall be expelled for one (1) full calendar year, pursuant to the Federal Gun-Free Schools Act of 1994, subject to the Executive Director's case-by-case authority to modify that term.

IV. Comprehensive Suspension Procedures

Step 1: Administrative Disciplinary Conference

Suspension shall be preceded, if possible, by an informal conference with the student, their parent/guardian, and, whenever practical, the referring teacher or staff member. The conference may be bypassed only in a genuine emergency involving a clear and present danger; in that case, the student and parent/guardian must be notified immediately of the right to a conference within two (2) school days. Reinstatement is not contingent on parental attendance at this conference.

Step 2: Immediate Notice to Parents/Guardians

An administrator or designee will make a reasonable effort to contact the parent/guardian by telephone or in person at the time of suspension, followed by written notice detailing the offense and the exact date of return.

Step 3: Suspension Time Limits & Extensions Pending Expulsion

- Standard suspensions (no expulsion recommendation) shall not exceed five (5) consecutive school days.
- Upon a formal expulsion recommendation, the suspension may be extended pending the expulsion hearing if the pupil's continued presence would be substantially disruptive, or the pupil poses an immediate threat to themselves or others.

V. Comprehensive Expulsion Procedures

A. Authority to Expel

A student may be expelled from OCASA only by a final vote of the Board of Directors, either hearing the case directly or acting on the recommendation of an Administrative Panel of at least three certificated employees who are neither a current teacher of the pupil nor a Board member.

B. Due Process Hearing Framework

- Day 0: incident occurs; the Principal reviews and, if warranted, issues a formal expulsion recommendation.
- Within 20 school days: the hearing date is scheduled.
- At least 10 calendar days before the hearing: written notice is provided in the family's native language.
- Within 30 school days of the determination that an expellable offense occurred (unless postponed for documented good cause): the hearing is held in closed session by default, unless the student/parent requests a public hearing in writing at least three (3) days before the date.

C. Required Contents of the Hearing Notice

- The exact date, time, and place of the hearing.
- A statement of the specific facts, evidence, charges, and statutory offenses at issue.
- A complete copy of OCASA's disciplinary rules relating to the alleged violation.

- Notice of the opportunity to appear with, and be represented by, legal counsel or a non-attorney advisor at the family's own expense.
- The right to inspect and copy all documents and evidence to be used at the hearing, at least ten (10) days prior.
- The opportunity to confront and cross-examine witnesses, or challenge evidence presented by the school.

VI. Special Procedures for Expulsion Hearings Involving Sexual Assault or Battery Offenses

1. Witness Protection and Sworn Declarations

Upon a finding of good cause that live testimony would subject a witness to an unreasonable risk of psychological or physical harm, testimony may be presented solely as a sworn declaration, examined privately by the Board or hearing panel, with redacted copies made available to the accused pupil.

2. Complaining Witness Bill of Rights

- At least five (5) days' advance notice of scheduled testimony.
- Up to two (2) adult support persons present while testifying.
- The option to have the hearing closed to the public while testifying.

3. Hearing Room Accommodations

OCASA will provide a separate waiting area, allow regular relief from examination, and may rearrange seating to reduce intimidation; testimony may be limited to the witness's normal school-attendance hours absent good cause.

4. Support Person Protocols

Support persons must be admonished that the hearing is strictly confidential before the witness testifies, and one may accompany the witness to the stand during testimony.

VII. Special Procedures for the Consideration of Suspension and Expulsion of Students with Disabilities

1. Services During Suspension

A student with a disability continues to be entitled to a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) during any period of suspension exceeding ten (10) cumulative school days in a school year, even where the behavior is later found not to be a manifestation of the disability.

2. Procedural Safeguards / Manifestation Determination Review (MDR)

Within ten (10) school days of any decision to change a student's placement because of a code-of-conduct violation, the IEP team (or, for a qualifying Section 504 student, the 504 team) will conduct a Manifestation Determination Review to decide whether the conduct was (a) caused by, or had a direct and substantial relationship to, the student's disability, or (b) the direct result of the school's failure to implement the IEP or 504 Plan.

- If the conduct is a manifestation of the disability: the team conducts a Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) and implements or revises a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP), and the student returns to the placement from which they were removed (unless the parent and school agree to a change, or the special-circumstances exception below applies).
- If the conduct is not a manifestation of the disability: the school may proceed with discipline in the same manner as for a student without a disability, except that FAPE must continue as described above.

3. Due Process Appeals

A parent who disagrees with the manifestation determination, or with any disciplinary placement decision, may file for an expedited special education due process hearing. Pending the outcome, the student generally remains in the interim alternative educational setting (or, where no such setting applies, the “stay-put” placement) as provided by law.

4. Special Circumstances

Regardless of whether the behavior is a manifestation of the disability, school personnel may remove a student to an Interim Alternative Educational Setting (IAES) for up to forty-five (45) school days where the student: (a) carried or possessed a weapon at school or a school function; (b) knowingly possessed, used, sold, or solicited a controlled substance at school or a school function; or (c) inflicted serious bodily injury upon another person at school or a school function.

5. Interim Alternative Educational Setting (IAES)

The IAES is determined by the IEP team and must allow the student to continue participating in the general curriculum and progressing toward IEP goals, and must include services and modifications designed to address the behavior so it does not recur.

State Testing Notification

Every year, California students take several statewide tests. Combined with grades, classwork, and teacher observations, these tests give families and teachers a more complete picture of a child's learning.

Pursuant to California Education Code § 48980, this notice informs you of the annual statewide assessments your child may take. Under California Education Code § 60615, parents/guardians may annually submit a written request to excuse their child from any or all CAASPP assessments. This exemption does not exist for the ELPAC or the Physical Fitness Test.

California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP)

Smarter Balanced Assessments for ELA and Math

Grades 3–8 and 11. Computer-based. Tests the California Common Core State Standards.

California Alternate Assessments (CAAs) for ELA and Math

Grades 3–8 and 11, for students whose IEP identifies alternate assessments. One-on-one, computer-based, administered by a familiar examiner. Tests Core Content Connectors derived from the Common Core standards.

California Science Test (CAST)

Grades 5 and 8, and once in high school. Computer-based. Tests the California Next Generation Science Standards (CA NGSS).

California Alternate Assessment (CAA) for Science

For students whose IEP identifies alternate assessments, grades 5 and 8 and once in high school. Four embedded performance tasks administered one-on-one shortly after content is taught.

California Spanish Assessment (CSA)

An optional test for grades 3–12 measuring Spanish reading, listening, and writing.

English Language Proficiency Assessments for California (ELPAC)

ELPAC (Initial & Summative)

Students whose home language survey lists a language other than English take the Initial ELPAC; students classified as English learners take the Summative ELPAC annually until reclassified.

Alternate ELPAC (Initial & Summative)

For students whose IEP identifies alternate assessments and whose home language survey lists a language other than English.

Physical Fitness Test (PFT)

FITNESSGRAM®

Grades 5, 7, and 9. Tests aerobic capacity, abdominal strength, trunk strength, upper body strength, and flexibility against the Healthy Fitness Zones standard.

Uniform Complaint Procedures (UCP)

OCASA has primary responsibility for ensuring compliance with federal and state laws governing educational programs. Pursuant to California Code of Regulations, Title 5, §§ 4600–4687, OCASA adopts this UCP policy to investigate and resolve complaints alleging unlawful discrimination, harassment, intimidation, bullying, student fees, or non-compliance with state or federal program requirements.

Scope of UCP Complaints

- Unlawful Discrimination or Harassment: based on actual or perceived race, color, ancestry, nationality, national origin, immigration status, ethnic group identification, age, religion, marital or parental status, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, or gender expression.
- Pupil Fees: charging a fee, deposit, or other charge for participation in an integral part of the instructional program.
- Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP): non-compliance with LCAP development, tracking, or reporting requirements.

Filing and Investigation Timeline

- Filing: within six (6) months of the alleged occurrence, submitted in writing to the Executive Director.
- Investigation & Decision: the Compliance Officer investigates, allows both parties to present evidence, and issues a written decision within 60 calendar days of receiving the complaint.
- State-Level Appeal: a complainant dissatisfied with OCASA's decision may appeal to the California Department of Education (CDE) within 30 calendar days of receiving the local decision.

Contact Mission Control or the Executive Director for a copy of the UCP form and complete filing instructions.

Title IX Sexual Harassment Policy

Pursuant to federal Title IX regulations (34 C.F.R. Part 106) and California Education Code § 221.8, OCASA does not discriminate on the basis of sex in its educational programs, activities, or employment practices, and is committed to a learning environment free from sexual harassment, sexual assault, and gender-based misconduct.

Definition of Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal, non-verbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature when: (1) submission is made an explicit or implicit condition of a student's academic status or progress (quid pro quo); or (2) the conduct is severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive enough to deny equal access to the school's education program (hostile environment).

Reporting Misconduct

Any student, parent, or guardian who believes a student has experienced sex discrimination or sexual harassment should report it immediately to the Title IX Coordinator:

- Title IX Coordinator: Kapil Mathur
- Address: 1820 E. 1st Street, North Tustin, CA 92705
- Contact: kcmathur@ocasa.org; (949) 269-3290

The school will conduct a prompt, thorough, and impartial investigation under federal Title IX grievance procedures, offering supportive measures to all parties. Retaliation against anyone who files a report or participates in an investigation is strictly prohibited.

Synthetic Drug & Fentanyl Awareness

The health, safety, and well-being of our students are the highest priorities of OCASA. In compliance with California law, this section provides annual information regarding the dangers of unprescribed synthetic drugs, specifically illicit fentanyl, and the risk of counterfeit pills.

What is Fentanyl?

Fentanyl is a synthetic opioid up to 50 times stronger than heroin and 100 times stronger than morphine. While pharmaceutical fentanyl is prescribed for severe pain control, illicitly manufactured fentanyl is distributed through illegal drug markets and is often mixed into other substances or pressed into counterfeit pills made to look like common prescription medications.

- Lethal in Small Doses: as little as two milligrams can suppress the respiratory system and cause a fatal overdose.
- Invisible Poison: fentanyl cannot be seen, smelled, or tasted, and cannot be reliably identified without chemical testing strips.

Smartphone Apps and Social Media Risks

Criminal drug organizations actively abuse social media and encrypted messaging platforms to target young people with direct marketing and easy, delivery-based transactions.

- Parent Action: discuss online safety openly with your child. No pill or medication is safe unless it was prescribed directly to them and dispensed by a licensed pharmacy.

Professional Boundaries Policy

To maintain a secure, professional, and transparent educational environment, OCASA enforces strict boundaries governing all interactions between adult employees (including teachers, staff, adult volunteers, and contractors) and students.

Direct Electronic Communication Boundaries

- Authorized Channels Only: staff may only communicate with students using official school-issued accounts (school email, approved learning management software).
- Banned Interactions: employees and adult volunteers are prohibited from communicating with students via personal cell phones, personal social media accounts, or private messaging platforms outside of the school's visibility.

Physical and Environmental Boundaries

- Supervised Environments: individual or small-group instruction must take place in visible, open areas or rooms with clear sightlines.
- Off-Campus Restrictions: no employee or volunteer may transport a student in a personal vehicle or meet with a student off-campus without explicit, prior written authorization from school leadership and the student's parent/guardian.