

OYSTER RIVER MIDDLE SCHOOL

STUDENT HANDBOOK 2019-2020

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New England League of Middle Schools

Spotlight School

1 Coe Drive, Durham, NH 03824

Telephone: (603) 868-2820

"Working together to engage every learner."

Welcome to Oyster River Middle School. The information in this handbook is intended to help students and parents better understand and navigate their school environment. If you have any questions or concerns please feel free to call at 868-2820 or e-mail Jay Richard, Principal at jrichard@orcsd.org or Bill Sullivan, Assistant Principal at bsullivan@orcsd.org.

Note to Students and Parents:

Students and their parents/guardians are responsible for reading and following the rules in this handbook. This handbook has been developed within the framework of the policies of the Oyster River School Board. In case of a conflict between a Board policy and the rules in this handbook, the policy will prevail. The school reserves the unlimited right to make changes to the handbook at any time without prior notice. The handbook is provided solely for the convenience of staff, students and parents, and to the extent permissible by law, the school expressly disclaims any liability which may otherwise be incurred.

A copy of the Board's Policy Manual is available in each school office and is also available on the District website at <http://www.orcsd.org/>.

ORMS Mission and Habits of Learning

The ORMS mission is to provide a creative and developmentally appropriate learning environment recognizing the educational, social, and emotional needs of every learner. Our goal is that every learner will develop skills needed to become a responsible, lifelong learner who is able to serve the school, community, and/or the world.

ORMS Habits of Learning

Bobcats are.... Respectful, Responsible, Engaged and have a Growth mindset.

Equal Educational Opportunities

The Oyster River Cooperative School District is committed to the concept and implementation of equal educational opportunities as required by federal and state laws for all students, regardless of sex, race, creed, color, marital status, national origin, sexual orientation, or physical or mental disability. See Board Policy AC.

Students and/or parents should address any questions or concerns to **Dr. James Morse, Superintendent of SAU #5**. The phone number is 868-5100 or email at jmorse@orcsd.org

ABSENCES AND DISMISSALS

If you are absent, please have a parent or guardian call the school. We have an answering machine, which is on from 3:15 p.m. until 7:45 a.m. The school phone is 868-2820 or 868-2155. When calling to report an absence please leave your name, student's grade, their class and a brief message explaining the reason. If the office does not receive a call regarding your absence, we will attempt to contact a parent either at home or at work. **Students who are not in school cannot attend after school activities.**

If a student is being dismissed, the student should bring a note signed by a parent to the office at the beginning of the school day and receive a dismissal slip from the office staff. This slip is shown to the classroom teacher at time of dismissal and the student should come to the office to sign out. If a student is returning to school after a dismissal, please check in with the office and receive a pass to class.

EXTENDED ABSENCE PROCEDURE

Families going on vacation while school is in session must notify the principal and all teachers in writing three weeks in advance. Prior to the absence, teachers will provide a calculation of the student's current average with a brief synopsis of topics to be covered in class during the student's absence. It will be the responsibility of the parents and the student to keep the student current in curricular topics presented in the school during a discretionary absence. The student will not be held accountable for specific assignments missed during the absence period, but will be responsible for subsequent assignment AND for all tests and quizzes relevant to the schoolwork completed by the student's class will not be sent on vacation with the student. Teachers are not required to design a separate program and will not be able to recreate classroom activities for students who are absent for reasons other than illness, emergency or religious observance.

ARRIVAL TIME/TARDINESS/DROP-OFF PROCEDURES

Students can be dropped off at the front entrance of the building starting at 8:00 AM when ORMS staff supervision begins. Walkers are also expected to wait at the front entrance or in the library. All students must be in the building seated ready to learn when school starts at 8:15AM. Students having breakfast in the Bobcat Café may enter school at 7:50AM. **Students arriving after 8:15 will be marked tardy.**

EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSINGS OR DELAYS

If school is delayed or cancelled, several radio stations will be notified. Please listen to WTSN (1270 AM), WOKQ (97.5 FM), WHEB (100.3FM) or WERZ (107.1 FM). Information about cancellations or delays will also be posted at www.orcsd.org, the school district website. In addition an e-mail message will be sent using the SchoolMessenger system. Please contact the middle school office if you are not receiving these SchoolMessenger messages. If no announcement is made, school will be in normal session. On days when school is cancelled, evening activities for that day are automatically cancelled as well.

BELCHER MEMORIAL LIBRARY

HOURS: 7:45AM TO 3:20PM

GENERAL INFORMATION:

Library resources include print and digital collections.

The digital resources often require log-on information which is available through classroom use and from the library.

Resources found in the library may be borrowed as follows:

BOOKS - 2 weeks (Renewals are possible as long as the item is not on reserve).

REFERENCE RESOURCES - used in the library media center

MAGAZINES AND VIDEOS - overnight loan

AV EQUIPMENT - start with your teacher to arrange use for classroom needs.

Please discuss damaged or lost items with Mr. Bellows.

DESTINY LIBRARY CATALOG

The Destiny catalog is an online system used throughout the school district to identify and access resources at all OR libraries.

Grade 5 and new ORMS students are provided a Destiny account and instruction to personalize use of this account.

STUDENT RECORDS

The Oyster River Cooperative School District complies with all federal and state laws concerning confidentiality of student records (see Board Policy JO). A notice is sent home with students at the beginning of the year about parent and student rights concerning student records. If you need more information, please contact the Principal or your child's Guidance Counselor.

SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES

Special education services are available for all students who qualify. If you have questions about whether your child may be eligible for such services, please contact your child's teacher or the Special Education Coordinator, Andrea Biniszkiwicz. She can be reached at 868-2820 or via e-mail at abiniszkiwicz@orcsd.org.

TEXTBOOKS AND OTHER SCHOOL PROPERTY

Students are responsible for proper care and return of textbooks and other school properties issued to them for their use, and are liable for the repair or replacement cost of items issued to them that are damaged or lost (see Board Policy JFCB).

VALUABLES

Please do not bring valuable items or large sums of money to school. If you must do so, please ask one of your teachers or office staff to secure your property during the day. The school assumes no responsibility for lost or stolen items.

Personal Electronic Devices

Students are not allowed to use personal electronic devices from the start of school until the end of school (8:15-3:05).

See school board policy [JICJ \(A\)](#)

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Physical activity is important to a healthy body and mind. Physical education is a required activity at ORMS that occurs every other day for every student all year.

If you need to be excused from physical education for more than two consecutive classes, you will need to show a doctor's note to your teacher.

STUDENT CONDUCT AND DISCIPLINE

The rules and disciplinary procedures in this handbook are intended as guidelines only. In determining the level of discipline, the administration may consider any relevant facts and circumstances, including but not limited to the nature of the violation, the student's grade level, the student's behavior accompanying the violation, the student's willingness to cooperate with the investigation, and the student's prior disciplinary record. For more information see Oyster River School Board policies JG-Discipline; JGB-Detention; JGD-Suspension and Dismissal.

THE TRUTH ABOUT CONSEQUENCES

Every choice you make has a consequence. Good choices will have positive consequences and poor choices may have consequences that you don't like. Your middle school years are important years because you will be given more opportunities to assume responsibility for your actions. With this increased independence comes the need to accept responsibility for personal choices. It is a real sign of maturity when a person can accept the consequence of a poor decision.

Every day you will be faced with making decisions and making choices. Sometimes you will make mistakes and you will need to accept a consequence for those mistakes. Serious incidents, particularly that are unsafe, may have more serious consequences, such as a detention or a suspension. Choices that create an unsafe environment for others, like bullying or harassment, could result in a suspension. You are an individual and you will be treated like an individual throughout your middle school experience, but it is your responsibility to make appropriate choices for behavior.

ORMS is Hands Off

ORMS is a “Hands Off” school! Not sure what “Hands Off” is? It means students need to always respect the personal space of their fellow students and must not become physical in any way. Touching, pushing, shoving, hugging, hitting, pulling and kicking are examples of being physical with another person. Why do we have this policy? It is simple; we know that “Hands Off” makes our school safe for everyone. As always, we appreciate all the students that do a great job with Hands Off.

The continuum of possible disciplinary consequences is as follows:

Verbal Warning: For most first offenses the incident is treated as a learning experience. It is assumed on most first offenses that the student made an honest mistake and only requires a warning. At this time the rule in question is clearly explained and future consequences for repeated incidents is outlined. If the behavior involved is extreme or negatively impacts others the consequence could jump ahead to a higher level. Please note that regardless of the level of consequence involved the rule in question is always explained to the student and questions answered in hopes of avoiding future incidents.

After-school Detention: An after-school detention is extra time spent after school as a consequence for your actions. These are generally assigned for repeated low level offenses or for an extreme behavior that negatively impacts others or disrupts the classroom environment. A detention may be assigned by your teachers or by the school administration. Detention begins at dismissal time (3:05) and generally will last until the late bus at 4:15 PM. This time will be used for doing schoolwork, reading, performing community service, or other related work, so come prepared. Parents will be notified prior to a student serving a detention. Failure to cooperate with the rules of detention will result in a higher level of consequence.

Suspension: There are two kinds of suspensions utilized at ORMS. Those two types are an in-school suspension and an out-of-school suspension. An in school suspension is served in the principal's office during the school day. An out-of-school suspension is served at home under parent supervision. Anyone receiving either of these suspensions may not participate in, or attend, any after-school or evening sports or activities on that day. Suspensions are only given for serious or chronic offenses. In all cases of suspension, a parent will be contacted.

LEARNING AND LETTING OTHERS LEARN, TOO

Everyone is here to learn. Everyone's job is to do their best. This means being respectful when others are talking and cooperating when you are asked to do something. Be sure to ask questions when you don't understand and to be respectful of any student who asks a question, or gives a wrong answer, even if the answer is obvious to you! Take responsibility for your own learning and be honest about your work. At ORMS learning is the most important activity and everyone has a responsibility to contribute to a productive atmosphere that promotes this primary purpose.

Plagiarism/Cheating

A student commits plagiarism if he/she uses ideas from another person and does not properly cite the source. A paper containing improperly borrowed ideas which are presented as original thinking is dishonest. Whether the unnoticed borrowing is intentional or due to sloppy workmanship, it is considered plagiarism. Plagiarism includes:

1. Word for word lifting of information from a source
2. Paraphrasing information which is not common knowledge
3. Using another person's original idea but developing it with details, examples and facts
4. Borrowing from another student or teacher with whom the assignment was discussed

The consequences for plagiarism are up to the discretion of the teacher. Plagiarism can result in no credit for the assignment and, depending upon the circumstances, may cause a student to fail the class even for a first offense. In addition, any subsequent offenses may result in disciplinary action up to and including, suspension.

SMOKING, VAPING AND TOBACCO USE

The Board has adopted a policy prohibiting smoking, vaping and the use of tobacco products on school property or at school-sponsored events (see Board Policy JFCG). Students who violate this policy are subject to disciplinary action and violations will also be referred to law enforcement authorities.

DRUGS AND ALCOHOL

The Board has adopted a comprehensive policy prohibiting students from consuming, possessing, furnishing, selling, receiving, buying, manufacturing or being under the influence of drugs, alcohol and other prohibited substances (see Policy JFCI). Violations of this policy will result in discipline, including suspension or expulsion from school, and referral to law enforcement authorities

WEAPONS, THREATS AND VIOLENCE

The Board believes that students and staff are entitled to learn and work in a school environment free of weapons, violence, threats (including bomb threats), and other disruptive and illegal behavior. Students are expected to conduct themselves with respect for others and in accordance with Board policies, school rules, reasonable unwritten behavior expectations and applicable state and federal laws. Students who engage in prohibited conduct are subject to discipline, including expulsion from school. The District will also report violations to law enforcement authorities in accordance with applicable state laws. Please see Board Policy JFCJ - Dangerous Weapons in Schools.

HARRASSMENT/SEXUAL HARRASSMENT

Harassment of students because of sex, race, creed, color, marital status, national origin, sexual orientation, or physical or mental disability is prohibited and may constitute illegal discrimination under state and federal laws. Any student who believes he/she may have been harassed is encouraged to discuss the matter with the building principal and may file a complaint which will be investigated. Students who engage in harassment or retaliation for reports of harassment are subject to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion. See Board Policy ACAA - Harassment and Sexual Harassment of Students and ACAA-R - Student Discrimination and Harassment Complaint

BULLYING

The Oyster River School Board has adopted a Pupil Safety and Violence Prevention policy (Policy JBC). ORMS defines bullying as:

Bullying

Anyone who uses physical, verbal (including spoken and written language) and/or electronic devices in a negative manner toward or in regard to another person.

Physical Bullying

The repeated use of force toward a person's body or personal belongings.

Examples

Hitting, punching, shoving, kicking, tripping, spitting, elbowing, shoulder checking, pinching, flicking, throwing objects, hair pulling, restraining, inappropriate touching, damaging physical property

Verbal Bullying

Using negative and/or damaging words (including both spoken and written) toward or in regard to another person (with mal intent).

Examples

Negative comments, name calling, lies, rumors, racial slurs, teasing, cussing, threats, fake compliments, using the R word, sexual orientation attacks

Cyber Bullying

Using social media, email or electronic devices in a negative manner toward or in regard to another person.

Examples:

Posting negative comments, fake profiles, sexting, making fun of photos, tagging photos, Twitter fights, posting negative videos, texting photos, negative status posts, hate blogs, hate pledges, texting rumors, hacking profiles, nasty emails, sending mean forwards

Any student who believes he/she has been a victim of bullying should report it to the building principal. Students who engage in bullying behavior are subject to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion.

ORMS DRESS CODE

Student clothing should not distract from the educational process or make others feel uncomfortable. Rude or offensive messages on clothing or other items is unacceptable, this includes but is not limited to references to drugs, alcohol, tobacco, sexual activity, or illegal acts. All undergarments must be covered. Loose or baggy pants and shorts need to be belted so undergarments are not exposed. Shirts which reveal the chest, undergarments, or abdomen are not acceptable. During the winter

months and any other extreme weather conditions, the school reserves the right to require students to wear coats outside for any activity. Sunglasses and Hoods are not to be worn inside the building unless there is a diagnosed medical reason. The school administration has the authority to prohibit other logos, pictures or messages which they determine to be in violation of the Board's nondiscrimination or harassment policies, or disruptive to the school's learning environment.

COMPUTER AND INTERNET USE

The Oyster River School Board has adopted a comprehensive policy and rules concerning the use of school computers and the Internet (see Policy IIBH). Students are required to follow the policy and school rules at all times and have no expectation of privacy in their use of school computers. Students who violate the policy and rules are liable to disciplinary action and suspension of computer privileges. The policy and rules are provided to students and discussed in class each year.

SCHOOL LOCKERS AND STORAGE FACILITIES

Use of lockers, desks and other school storage facilities is a privilege granted to students. All storage facilities are school property and remain under the control, custody, and supervision of the school. Students have no expectation of privacy in school storage facilities or for any items placed in such facilities. School officials have the authority to inspect and search storage facilities and their contents on a random basis, with or without reasonable suspicion, and without notice or consent. Please see Board policy JFG.

SCHOOL LUNCH AND BREAKFAST PROGRAMS

"The Bobcat Café"

Breakfast and lunch are available to all students. Breakfast begins at 7:45 am. Lunches are scheduled by grade. Students may purchase hot lunches (menus are posted) or purchase items such as sandwiches, fruit, yogurt, salad, drinks or a la carte items. The monthly menu is posted at the website. Applications for free or reduced lunch can be obtained from the office or online.

All students are assigned PIN numbers for their personal accounts. In the case that students don't have sufficient funds, they will NOT be allowed to receive a hot lunch.

Parents can manage their child's lunch account on-line. Instructions for how to set up and manage an on line lunch account can be found at the school district web site (www.orcsd.org) under the Food Services link.

Expectations for behavior in the cafeteria are consistent with school-wide expectations. You are responsible for cleaning your personal table space and floor space.

SNACK POLICY

Each team will establish a time that students are allowed to eat snack in classrooms.

NURSE'S OFFICE

The school nurse is available to all students who are ill or hurt. Before going to see the nurse, you should have a signed pass from a teacher. The school nurse will call home should a student need to be dismissed due to illness. We ask that students do NOT call/text home prior to visiting the nurse.

MEDICATION

All medication brought to school must be kept in the nurse's office, labeled with the student's name and accompanied by a signed parental request. This includes over the counter medications such as aspirin, Tylenol, or decongestants. The Board has adopted a comprehensive policy and procedure concerning the administration of medications at school. Parents may request that medications be administered at school in accordance with the established policy and procedure. Students may not carry or self-administer medications except as permitted by Board policy (see Policy JHCD). Students shall not share any prescription or over the counter medication with another student (see policy JLCD). Questions should be directed to the School Nurse.

EMERGENCY DRILLS

During the year, there will be scheduled and spontaneous drills. When the alarm sounds, follow your teacher's directions for departure from the room. No talking is allowed during a drill. All students should exit in single file lines. Directions for exits are posted in each classroom.

STUDENT TRANSPORTATION

BUS CONDUCT

The Board has adopted a policy concerning bus conduct (see Policy JFCC). Students who misbehave on the bus are subject to suspension of their bus privileges. Parents and students should be aware that District school buses may be equipped with electronic surveillance devices (see Board Policy EBF).

LATE BUS/BUS PERMISSION

Students need written permission from their parent or guardian to ride a bus to a friend's home. This note must be stamped at the main office before 2:00. Only students involved in a school sponsored after school activity may ride the late bus. The late bus operates Monday - Thursday and leaves school at 4:15pm.

PARENT INFORMATION

HOME/SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

It is our goal as a school to be as paperless as possible. For every school-wide mailing we **don't** send we save at least 700 sheets of paper and \$400 in postage. For this reason we try to put all relevant information, like this handbook, on our school web site at www.orcsd.org/orms/. We ask all students and parents to bookmark the school web site and check it regularly. Academic teams will post homework and important announcements on their individual team web sites. The home page of the middle school will provide an accurate calendar of up-coming school-wide events. Each team, with parent/guardian cooperation, will keep an e-mail list that will be used for team business as well as school-wide announcements. At the beginning of the school year when these e-mail lists are being created it is helpful if all families provide accurate e-mail addresses to their son/daughters team of teachers.

VISITORS

For school security reasons all adult visitors must stop at the main office and sign in before proceeding with any business in the school. The main office is located at the front door off of Dennison Rd. Please always enter the building through this entrance.

All visitors are required to wear a white identification sticker to show that they have checked in at the office.

MESSAGES

During any school day, the office staff receives at least 20-40 messages to be delivered to students.

Messages will be delivered to students prior to 3:05 p.m. each day. Messages needing immediate attention should be requested in emergencies only. We ask parents and students to make plans before school begins each day to minimize the need for messages.

FIELD TRIPS

When appropriate, field trips are scheduled during the year to enhance classroom instruction. Parents will receive an information letter explaining the intent and cost of the trip, and requesting permission for students to participate. Parents are often invited to chaperone trips. This help is greatly appreciated. Students may be excluded from trips for discipline or safety reasons. Families will be contacted in a timely fashion in these cases.

Occasionally, all ORMS students and staff are expected to participate in a whole school field trip. Trips like this are designed to create community within our school as well as support the community in which we live. We believe these enrichment opportunities will enhance our student's emotional wellbeing, social skills, cultural appreciation and experiential learning beyond the school walls. These opportunities are in line with our Oyster River Cooperative School District Vision statement (first paragraph referenced below).

ORCSD is a place where students, parents, staff and community members work together to foster a life-long passion for learning and engage all students in developing the skills and knowledge they need to further their education; participate as citizens, succeed in the work-place; live healthy lives; and, thrive in the 21st century

Some Examples of ORMS whole school field trips are: -UNH cultural and athletic events, ORMS community service projects (Servicepalooza).

We feel students gain a better understanding of the community around them when they actively participate in a broad range of activities within that community. We are blessed to have a caring and supportive community that invites us to join with them to enrich the academic experience of all students.

LOST AND FOUND

The ORMS "lost and found" is located outside the cafeteria in the hall-way. Due to storage issues lost items will only be stored there temporarily. At various times throughout the year it is announced that the "lost and found" items will be donated to charity if not claimed. It is the individual student's responsibility to check for personal items. Please label your possessions so they may be returned more effectively.

MEDIA INFORMATION

On occasion, the District allows media outlets such as local newspapers, radio stations and television stations to visit the school to report on school programs and activities. The District may also feature students, or their photographs, voices or work for promotional and educational reasons on the District web site, cable TV, publications or school/community events. A Media Permission Form is sent home at the beginning of 5th grade or upon enrollment. Please note that releases are not required for public events such as athletic events or graduation. If you need further information, please contact the building principal.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

At ORMS we offer a wide range of extra and co-curricular activities. Participation in all activities is considered a privilege granted to students for being a good citizen of our community. In order for a student to be eligible to participate in these activities they must be in good academic standing and meet ORMS behavior expectations.

For more information on extracurricular activities at ORMS please visit our school website at www.orcsd.org/orms/.